

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL HIERARCHIES  
IN SELECTED AREAS IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a disagreement among anthropologists and the sociologists, regarding the meanings of the word caste. For example, Dumont and Pecock argue that a caste system is distinguished from other sorts of social stratification because it is connected with particular religious beliefs. Where these beliefs are held, then caste exists: where they are not, social stratification may exist, but it is not a caste system. They write:

The caste system can only be understood when we realize that it is permeated by essentially religious conceptions and further that these religious conceptions are based upon a social apprehension of the pure and the impure (contributions to Ind. Soc., II, 1958: 47).

Contrasted to their view is a view shared by Barth, Berreman and Bailey.

Barth writes:

If the concept of caste is to be useful in sociological analysis its definition must be based on structural criteria and not on particular features of the Hindu philosophical scheme.

(ed. Leach 1962: 145)

Like Barth, Berreman holds that caste is a form of rigid social stratification and may occur in any society.

Adherence to a religious principle may not significantly affect the attitudes and behavior to which logic would seem, or to which dogmas attempts, to tie it. A comparison of the realities of caste attitudes and interaction in India and the United States suggests that no group of people is content to be low in a caste hierarchy to live a life of inherited deprivations and subjection - regardless of the rationalizations offered them by their superiors or constructed by themselves. This is one of many points in which further cross cultural comparison, and only cross cultural comparison of caste behaviour might be conclusive.

(Am. Jr. of Soc. 1960: 127)

Berremen's conclusions are that caste is a hierarchy of endogamous divisions in which membership is hereditary and permanent (1960: 127).

Bailey writes:

The rigidity characteristic of caste can, however, be criticized on the grounds that it is not so much an ultimate criterion, but rather a suggestion inviting further analysis. This analysis can proceed in two ways: a) either one can say that status ascription at birth and status immutability is underwritten by a set of beliefs about pollution; or b) one can say that status ascription at birth and status immutability are entailed by other structural characteristics, whether these are analytic (i.e. entailed in a strict sense, meaning included in the definition of birth ascription and status immutability) or they are synthetic (i.e. empirically the case - for example that caste is always associated with a particular kind of economy, or never found in societies above a certain population level. One does not have to choose between these definitions, in the sense that if one is right the other is wrong: (a) concerns culture, (b) concerns structure. To follow one rather than the other reflects one's interest or one's training, nothing more. To set them up as alternatives makes for disputation but not for understanding.

(Archiv. Europ. Soc. IV. 1963: 113-4)

It will be agreed that such ambiguity in the meaning of the word caste is confusing. In the words of Leach:

Such double usage is unfortunate; the tendency to stress the status-group components of caste prejudices the whole question as to what is the essential sociological nature of the Indian phenomenon. Conversely the merging of class and caste concepts is liable to lead to a highly distorted image of the nature of "colour bar" and other manifestations of rigid social differentiation.

( 1962: 1)

It seems that the disagreement regarding the meaning of the word caste emanates from a lack of agreement concerning the role of religion in

systems of action. Following Firth, here religion is being defined 'as a concern of man in society with basic human ends and standards of values, seen in relation to non-human entities or powers', (1964: 229). The confusion arises because Dumont and Pocock find the manifestation of this concern in purity and pollution and therefore consider caste as a uniquely Indian phenomenon. Barth and Berreman who do not regard the role of religion as significant, define caste in structural terms only.

This research attempts to answer the question; does religion have a significant role in systems of action? The hypothesis is that religion does have a significant role in systems of action and therefore the word caste can justifiably be used in the Indian context. It is in this sense that the word caste has been used in this thesis.

I have tested the hypothesis in communities in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. The religion of the majority in India is Hinduism and that of the majority in Pakistan is Islam. Until recently India and Pakistan made up a single country. They have a long common history and have shared ethnic groups, migrations, invasions, conquerors, and empire builders as well as law, technology, administration and economic institutions. Rural communities in the two countries exhibit a very similar social structure. Every village contains a number of endogamous groups each called caste in India and koam in Pakistan. These groups have precedence over one another thereby forming a hierarchy.

I have compared social hierarchies in India with those in Pakistan to test the hypothesis. I regard social hierarchies as forms in which social

roles are ranked in a society. These forms are products of both structural and cultural factors. Following Mill's method of difference in 'experimental inquiry', I have attempted to bring out the role of cultural factors (religion in this study) through a comparison between social hierarchies in the two countries. Instead of comparing different instances of a phenomenon, to discover in what they agree, this method compares an instance of its occurrence with an instance of its non-occurrence to discover in what they differ (1906: 257). In the present study the 'instance of occurrence' consists of common formative factors and the instance of 'nonoccurrence' consists of Hinduism.

This method appears to be free from some drawbacks which characterize the comparative method adopted by many scholars in this field. Usually comparisons are made between caste in India with structures outside the Indian scene. Some examples are Chapple and Coon (1942: 437), Nadel (1954: 9-22), Donoghue (LIX, 1957: 1000-17). These scholars find 'caste' in Arabia, Polynesia, Africa, Guatemala, and Japan. Others such as Allison Davis, B. Gardner, M. Gardner (1969: 1-15), Dollard (1957: 61-3), Gallagher (1938:109), Myrdal (1944: 668-75), Warner (1936: 234-7), and Berreman (1960: 121-7), refer to Negro-white relations in the United States, and particularly in the South as being those of caste. Yalman (ed. Leach 1962: 78-111), and Barth (ed. Leach 1962: 113-46) find similarities between the Indian caste and systems of social stratification in Ceylon and Swat respectively.

Tambiah has pointed out the drawbacks of the above method in these words:

If we start with the assumption that there is something common between them, then we shall concentrate on patterns that appear similar and measure the degree of their similarity on some kind of quantitative scale. The danger in this approach is that we may artificially separate and lose sight of the total phenomenon. A similar objection applies to the method which selects elements of expressive symbolism such as pollution from the total context of social relations and attempt to explain them in terms of general human psychological propensities. Psychological universals do not explain differences in social types.

(ed. Reuck 1967: 328)

I find from my own research in Swat that one is likely to misread facts as Barth appears to have done, while attempting to find similarities between Indian caste and other systems of social stratifications. He writes:

...Saints cannot compete with Pakhtuns in wealth even though they claim the highest ritual status.

( ed. Leach 1960: 141)

This is a questionable generalization. There are many instances of 'saints' competing for wealth and power. One such notable instance is that of Miangual Abdul Wadud, otherwise known as Badshah Sahib, a 'Saint by caste' by Barth's definition. He gradually became the wealthiest and most powerful man in Swat. Leach is correct when he writes:

I believe that social anthropologists are like the medieval Ptolemaic astronomers; we spend our time trying to fit the facts of the objective world into the framework of a set of concepts which have been developed a priori instead of from observation.

(1961: 26).



I have limited the comparison to the political and economic hierarchies only. By political hierarchy I mean ranking according to power, authority and influence. When analyzing a political hierarchy I ask: a.) who occupies which position in the scale of power, authority and influence? b.) why does a group occupy the position which it does?, c.) how far is the element of religion a determinant in the political hierarchy?, d.) is the position ascribed or achieved?

By economic hierarchy I mean ranking according to command over resources. When analyzing economic hierarchy I ask: a.) who occupies which position in the scale of command over resources?. b.) why does a group occupy the position which it does?, c.) how far is religion a determinant of economic hierarchy?, d.) is the position ascribed or achieved? I justify the limitation of the comparison to political and economic hierarchies only, on the following grounds: a.) as has been shown by Bales, ranking according to power and authority as well as access to resources is a structural feature of all group life including even small groups tested in the laboratory (1950: 73). Thus such a ranking can serve as a common denominator in comparison between different groups. b.) the role of cultural factors like religion and kinship can be discovered through questions such as 'who occupies which position in the hierarchies and why' and therefore both culture and kinship are variables.

Let me briefly restate my position: my first assertion is that role differentiation is a structural concomitant of all human collective living and that roles tend to be evaluated forming hierarchies. My second assertion is that societies differ in regard to the evaluation

of the attributes of the incumbents of these hierarchies. Williams writes:

The accepted scales of valuation of different societies, or even of subgroup in the same society, often have little in common. How for instance does one judge accurately the relative standing of a Spanish bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, a Brahman, a French general, an American millionaire, a Russian commissar, a Swedish scientist, a member of the English nobility? Individuals occupying these positions have high ranks in their respective social systems.

( 1970: 102)

Simmel expresses this as follows:

All leaders are also led, in innumerable cases the master is the slave of his slaves...In the grossest fashion, this is shown by the journalists who give content and direction to the opinion of a mute multitude. But he is nevertheless forced to listen and guess what the tendencies of this multitude are, what is desired to hear, and to have confirmed and whither it wants to be led.

(ed. Wolff ( 1950: 181-6)

Udy's empirical researches in 150 non-industrial societies also express the same view:

...it was found that much of the technologically unexplained variation could be accounted for by the political structure of the society concerned; predominantly political influences under certain conditions tend to override the technological considerations in determining organizational structure.

( 1959: 126)

My third assertion is that because, excepting religion, formative factors in communities in India and Pakistan are common, a comparison between social hierarchies in the two countries brings out the role of religion in systems of action. This was true of the days when the communities were not beset by modern influences and this is true also

today. It is on this account that this is a diachronic study.

It is necessary to explain here what I mean by concepts 'power', 'authority', 'influence'. By power I mean latent force or the ability to use force. Force means the reduction or limitation or closure or even total elimination of alternatives to the social actions of one person or group by another person or group.

( Bierstedt 1950: 730-8)

Authority is delegated or institutionalized power. A body is said to be having influence over those who make a choice in conformity with the body's wishes without any apparent coercion. Influence is persuasive. It is voluntary to a much greater degree than is power. Though power and influence have some common characteristics, one may be distinguished from the other. They are independent variables. Karl Marx was not a man of power but his influence has certainly been great. A common characteristic of power and influence is legitimization or 'ground' in the terminology employed by Gerth and Mills:

An adequate understanding of power relations thus involves a knowledge of the grounds on which a power holder claims obedience, and the terms in which the body feels an obligation to obey.

Further:

Power is simply the probability that man will act as another man wishes. This action may rest upon fear, rational calculation of advantages, lack of energy to do otherwise, loyal devotion, indifference or a dozen other individual motives...penalty alone does not bring obedience.

( 1953: 193,195)

Finally I give below the arrangement of the presentation. It has three parts. The first is devoted to five communities in India and second to one community in West Pakistan. The third part contains conclusions.

The five communities in India are Gaon in Western India, Ramkheri in Central India, Bisipara in Eastern India, Sripuram in Southern India, and Rampur in Northern India. The community in West Pakistan is Malakpur. Published research reports are the only sources of information about the Indian communities. In the case of Pakistan the sources of information include research publication by Eggar, District Gazetteers, and my own field work in the winter of 1969. The names of the village in Pakistan are fictitious.

The discussion of each community is divided into three parts viz., a brief discussion of the village population, political hierarchy and finally economic hierarchy. Each hierarchy has been presented in two parts. The first part comprises description and identification of the hierarchy in question and the second part contains discussion concerning questions such as "why do the groups occupy the position in the hierarchy which they do?"

GAON

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# GAON

Gaon is situated near Poona, Maharashtra. It has a total population of 1421 persons comprising both old and new residents. Old residents number 1081 and new residents 340. Recently there has been a substantial influx of immigrants into the village. This is why there are over 300 newcomers in Gaon. The caste composition of the village is given in the following Table. As each caste has a main occupation, the Table also gives names of castes along with the main occupation of each. Forty persons are non-Hindus. They are not a Hindue caste and therefore have not been shown in the Table.

TABLE I - Population and Occupation of Long Standing Castes  
Old and New Residents

<u>Caste</u>	<u>Main Occupation</u>	<u>Old Resident Population</u>		<u>New-Resident Population</u>	
		<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Brahman	Family priest	5	27	1	4
Gurav	Temple priest	4	22	-	-
Maratha	Agriculturist	48	312	26	176
Sonar	Goldsmith	1	5	-	-
Kumbhar	Potter	9	67	-	-
Sagar Rajput	Agriculturalist	46	291	11	59
Keli	Water carrier	2	7	-	-
Nhavi	Barber	1	4	1	7
Lohar	Blacksmith	2	10	-	-
Parit	Washerman	1	6	-	-
Ramosi	Watchman	2	10	1	3
Kaikadi	Basketmaker	3	12	1	5
Cambhar	Leather Worker	13	73	-	-
Mahar	Scavanger	24	117	2	9
Mang	Rope Maker	22	112	5	43

Castes which have settled in Gaon only recently.

TABLE 2 - Population and Occupation of New-Resident Castes

<u>Caste</u>	<u>Main Occupation</u>	<u>Population</u>	
		<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Mali	Gardener	7	38
Dhangar	Shepherd	1	5
Bhoi	Fisherman	2	5
Vadari	Earth Worker	1	7
Ghadsai	Musician	2	1
Holar	Musician	2	12
Mang Gardui	Cattle Breeder	2	7

Administratively Gaon is a part of Vadi, a settlement about two miles away. The above Tables show only those castes which live in Gaon. The entire population of Gaon itself does not live in a single settlement. Many landowning families have shifted to houses built on their farms. Thus, a number of hamlets, the most important of which are the Rajput hamlet and the Maratha hamlet, constitute a part of Gaon.

## THE POLITICAL HIERARCHY

Traditionally Rajputs are at the head of the political hierarchy. Both headmen, the police patil and the revenue patil, are Rajputs. A very high majority of leaders namely, ten out of thirteen are Rajputs. It is they who run the village. They organize community affairs and lead in the collection of funds for village projects. They are sought to settle disputes. Even the patils consult them before making any important decision concerning the village. Their importance may be judged from the fact that the decisions made by panchayat, (village council), representing Gaon and Vadi regarding the removal of the dilapidated houses in the main settlement remained a dead issue. Evidently it was because these leaders were not involved in that decision.

Yet all Rajput leaders are not equally influential. The Bal Rajputs comprising eight households were clearly higher in this respect than the Annas who comprised nine households. This was evident from a number of incidents. One occasion a Rajput made sexual advances toward a Rope-maker girl who was working in a field. Later her sister reprimanded the offender and slapped him. As a measure of retaliation, the young man manhandled her husband with the help of some other people. The Bals demonstrated their influence as well as their support to the Rope-makers by not only beating up the young man but also getting him fined.

Another instance is a dispute between a farmer of high caste and a group of Harijans. The farmer accused the Harijans of stealing jagari, (a kind



of raw sugar) and threatened to get them "externed<sup>\*</sup>" from the village. The Harijans insisted that the Jagari in question was a baluta (traditional patron-client economic relations) payment and approached the Bals for help. Thereupon the Bals testified to the magistrate in Poona that the Harijans were men of good character and saved them from being externed (p. 191).

A third instance is the occasion when Bal invited the Harijans to enter the compound of a Brahman household and to take out water from the Brahman's well. This happened on an Independence Day. This was an unprecedented act and neither the Brahman nor anyone in the village could protest.

Finally, perhaps the clearer demonstration of the political primacy of the Bals was evident in an incident which took place at Hanuman Jayanti in 1956. It was customary to erect a pole, (malkhamba) which the young men of the village used for calisthenics. The Annas (Rajput) decided to erect a separate pole and asked two men of the Leather-worker caste to proceed with the work. Many villagers, especially the Bals objected to this. The two Leather-workers were beaten and the Annas project was halted. The matter did not end here and the next day many Annas were caught and were beaten by the Bals.

The second in political hierarchy were the Marathas. Among the village leaders two were Marathas. One of them lived outside the village but

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\* Required by court order to stay out of the district.

exerted considerable influence, the other, who lives in the village, is very assertive and aggressive. Such a paucity of leadership has placed the Marathas in a somewhat less important position in the village political life.

The Brahmins are third in the hierarchy. Two village leaders are Brahmins. The fact that the Brahmin leaders are not aggressive makes the caste less politically significant.

Other castes in the village did not have any notable leadership and play only subordinate roles. Generally speaking the 'clean castes' support the Anna Rajputs and the Harijans support the Bal Rajputs. Such a cleavage in the village however, is of a kind different than what have been called "horizontal and vertical cleavages." Here though the Rajputs are divided into two factions, (dividing the caste into two groups), their supporters maintain cohesion of their respective castes. Orenstien explains it as follows:

As a result, some people conceived the village as divided into two "parties," the "main settlement party" and the "Anna party". In fact the split was not so sharp or all-embracing as they seem to think. Many important villagers lived outside the settlement, nowhere near the Anna hamlet, and though these sympathized with the Annas, they did not openly side with them, but remained neutral. Most of those who lived in or near the main settlement also sympathized with the Annas but continued to maintain a facade of friendliness with the Bals. Thus the feuding groups did not have a clearcut boundaries of all inclusiveness of the "factions" reported from other parts of India. (P. 88)

Nor perhaps can the two factions be ranked in a definite political hierarchy.

It appears to be as follows:

1. Rajput (a) Bal  
(b) Anna
2. Martha
3. Brahmins
4. Others

Recent constitutional changes have provided the Harijans to improve their political status. Seats have been reserved for them in village panchayat and other elected assemblies. There is one such seat in the joint panchayat of Gaon and Vadi. However, the Harijan member is a man of no consequence and the political status of the Harijans is almost unchanged. Not long ago there was a dispute between Rajput landowners and the Scavengers regarding bluta payments. The Scavengers refused to work but later begged for forgiveness. It was only after they had apologized that they were allowed to live and work in the village. (p. 157).

Contrasted to the village scene a different political hierarchy appears to be shaping up in the larger political arena of the taluka, (subdistrict), the district and the state as a whole. Many caste organizations encompassing large number of villages have come into existence. They are of two types. In one of the types the organization is theoretically open to all castes. In actual practice, however, the members belong to one or a group of congruous castes. The professed aims of these organizations are to bring about changes on the state and national level. The Schedule Caste Federation and the Styasodhak Smaj are examples of this type. Both cater to Harijans and are anti-Brahman. In the second type of caste organization

membership is restricted both in theory and in practice to a single caste. These organizations aim at uplifting their own castes. An example of this type is Dhangar Association. It is doubtful if political change in the larger arena have brought about any significant changes in the political hierarchy in the village, excepting perhaps that hostility on caste lines is increasing.

## B

Orenstein explains political hierarchy in the following words:

Membership in appropriate traditional bhauki was an important determinant of leadership. The most significant bhauki was, of course, that of the Kokes; all of the Rajputs listed were of this group. All kokes in Gaon were thought of as the Patils of the the village, and they thought of themselves in this way. As a result they had a "natural" right to lead others. More than any others, therefore, they were prone to seek power, either by direct assertion of themselves or by subtly placing themselves in position of influence. Others accepted their leadership more readily precisely because their bhauki held "legitimate rights to power." (P. 178)

Srinivas comments on the emergence of "legitimate rights to power" as follows:

Opportunities for seizing political power were more likely to be available to the leaders of the dominant castes, and even tribes, than to others. This is why in South India dominant peasant castes such as the Marathas, Reddis, Vellalas, Nayars, and Coorgs have been able to claim Kshatriya status. Numerical strength and the prestige and power coming from ownership of land put them in a strategic position for capturing political power in periods of uncertainty, which were only too frequent.

Quoting Pannikar and Shah, Srinivas holds that this situation was not confined to South India. The Pala dynasty of Bengal in the medieval period was "Shudra" in origin, and the Patidars of Gujrat was a caste of local peasants. He elaborates the process of social mobility in the following words.

When a leader of a dominant caste or small chieftain graduated to the position of a raja or king, acquiring, in the process, the symbolic and other oppurtenances of Kshatriyahood, he in turn became a source of mobility for individuals and groups living in his domain. A necessary concomitant, if not precondition, of such graduation was Sanskritization, that is the acceptance of the rites, beliefs, ideas and values of the great tradition of Hinduism as embodied in the sacred books. For instance a king who did not have the requisite number of Brahmins for performing an important ceremony did not hesitate to raise members of a lower ranking group to the status of Brahmins.

(ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 190)

The case of Gaon Rajputs has been less dramatic. Once Dhanger (shepherd) they decided in a caste council to up-grade their caste and call themselves as Sagar Rajputs, apparently after they had acquired landed property in Gaon as well as in the adjacent areas (P. 145). It might be maintained therefore that factors which go to "legitimize right of a caste" to political power include, organization and leadership, wealth and ritual purity (ascribed or achieved). The significant questions are: Was a caste pure enough to have unhampered social interaction with high castes? Has the caste been wealthy enough to attract followers? Was the nature of its occupation such that it could interest itself in political activities? The present political primacy of the Gaon Rajputs has such a history.

The Marathas rank numerically highest in the village (Table 1), but are second in the political hierarchy. This is not because they are ritually handicapped. They associate themselves with Sivaji's conquest and the Kshatriya varna. They wear the "sacred thread" and rank fourth in wealth in Gaon. Though recorded as "pure Soodras of the Books" the villager

never thought of them as in the Sudra varna (P. 45). Their secondary political position is apparently due to a lack of leadership and active interest in the village affairs. Another explanation appears to be that "the Marathas did not consider themselves dominant in the village and so did not compete so much with one another in order to exercise domination" (P. 90). Contrasted to them are the Rajputs. "All Kokes (Rajput) were patils" (P. 89).

The Brahmins have only two households and are the wealthiest caste in the village. Until recently their occupation was Kulkarni (village accountant). They were village servants and received baluta payments. Their duties included collecting taxes, maintaining records of land and land rights, as well as checking crops. This gave them considerable power and influence. After the appointment of talathi (accountant appointed by government) they have lost much of their earlier importance, though still regarded by some as important men. (PP. 173,267). Their third position in the political hierarchy may be ascribed to mainly to their passive role and to their small numbers.

In the case of Harijans "low-caste membership was probably an obstacle to the assumption of power" (P. 179). A wealthy Leather-worker who was well qualified and was of proper age to act as a leader was not regarded as a leader by anyone in the village.

Orenstein concludes that the primary determinants of village leadership are wealth and membership in the proper traditional bhauki (local subcaste). Probably these conclusions do not explain many things. The association of

leadership with any particular group in a community is not an unusual phenomenon. It may take place in any feudal society or in the Negro-White southern United States. Again, even in the case of the high castes in India which are associated with leadership today, it would be difficult to say with any certainty if they had enjoyed such a status all through history. As has been pointed out earlier, kings are known to have raised many castes to higher ranks and the possibility that caste mobility has been taking place through migration cannot be ruled out. But probably what is significant is the fact that an individual is inextricably linked with his bhauki in many ways. His full membership of a bhauki is dependent upon the origin of his parents. He is denied full membership, should any one of his parents belong to any unacceptable bhauki. He shares deity with his bhauki. In case of a death of a member in the bhauki he is automatically polluted and has to be in a state of sutuk (defilement of kinsmen resulting from death of a married person) along with other members. In case of his own death his mortuary rites have to be performed by the members of his own bhauki to which he belongs. The spouses for his children may only be sought in bhauki/of a definite ritual specification. He is identified with his bhauki in social intercourse. The rules regarding commensality or acceptance of water, smoking and shaking hands, forms of address and seating arrangements are all identical for everyone in the bhauki.

The significance of inextricable links of the individual with his bhauki is evident in two ways. First, is the direction of the cleavage. For instance let us compare the cleavages in Gaon with those in Tararwala.



The existence of hostility within the bhauki was overtly recognized and attested to by the villagers. Inquiry about the matters or even about matters not directly on the subject, often elicited statements such as, in the words of one man, "brothers always fight ... there is always fighting among bhauki members"... Open conflict resulting in a sharp division within a kheri bhauki existed in the Koke group, the main bhauki of Rajputs. The feud included many but not all Kokes. Seventeen households were involved. Conflict between the two groups was intense. Physical violence occurred at times, and on some occasions, especially ceremonials, even pitched battles (P. 86-7).

Presumably, Bals and Annas came together on ceremonials. This is because:

In the kheri bhauki as a whole, two of the most important areas of obligation and cooperation were in marriage and death. It was considered absolutely necessary at the time of death to have kheri bhauki members assist in removing the dead body from the house. They were required to be among the "Pall bearers" who carried the deceased to the place of cremation or burial. In deciding on a spouse for one's child, it was thought highly desirable to have some mature member of the kheri bhauki, participate, at least nominally, in the decision..."If someone goes to the other village to choose a girl without people of his kheri bhauki, no one will give him respect or value. They will think there is something wrong with him" (P. 85).

The situation in Tararwals is different. Inayat Ullah writes:

The faction in its climax becomes a strongly totalitarian group. Efforts are made to harmonize the economic interests and social activities of every member family to that of the group through social control till no aspect of the individual life remains uncontrolled.

Within the faction, each member family is assigned a definite role. Some guide and lead the faction. Some finance it in times of trouble. Others provide the hands to fight. Social inequality which is quite sharp otherwise, is reduced within the faction, as it is less determined by birth or caste privileges and more by devotion to the cause of the group. Desertion of one's faction lowers the moral credit of the family. It is usually regarded as unpardonable offence.

Inayat Ullah shows the composition of factions in the village as in the following Table.

TABLE 3 - "Caste" Composition of Patti-based Faction in Tararwala  
In 1957

Name of caste	Faction			Families connected with	
	M	N	G	Two factions/All factions	
Tarrar - Land owners	3	2	1	1	-
Warraich	-	-	3	-	-
Mangat	-	-	1	-	-
Cheema	1	-	-	-	-
Gondal	1	-	-	-	-
Gakkhar	-	-	1	-	-
Faqir	1	-	-	1	-
Hajra	-	-	-	2	-
Sangranna	2	-	-	-	-
Bawra	1	-	-	-	-
Joya	4	-	-	-	-
Lilla	1	-	-	-	-
Awan	2	-	-	-	-
Rajput	2	-	-	1	3
Bhatti	1	-	-	-	-
Teli- Oil-presser	3	-	-	2	1
Nai-Barber	2	-	2	-	-
Machhi-Baker	4	1	1	-	-
Kumhar - Potter	5	-	-	1	-
Mochi - Cobbler	1	-	2	1	-
Lahar - Blacksmith	-	-	-	-	1
Tarkhan - Carpenter	-	-	-	1	1
Julaha - Weaver	1	-	-	1	2
Arain	1	-	-	-	-
Mirasi	-	-	-	-	2
Mussali-Farm labourer	15	-	1	2	1
Sayyed	-	-	-	-	1
Dindar	3	1	-	1	-
Unknown (refugee)	1	-	-	3	-
Total families	55	4	12	17	12

Each faction is denoted with the initial letter of the name of the respective leaders of the 3 factions.

He continues:

From this table it can be seen that factions extended their hold over 71 per cent of the families of the village. These families are exclusively attached to one of the three factions. All families belonging to M and G have a hostile attitude toward one another. But this hostility is most intense among the families which are the nucleus of the factions and decreases among the outer, "parasitic" families. In faction M the nucleus families are of the Tarar caste, while on Faction G Mangat, Warraich and Tarar together constitute the base of the faction.

The nucleus family of each faction would not have any social or economic relations with one another; no member of these families would speak to his counterpart. They would not sit, play or smoke hugga together; wherever any member of one of the nucleus families of one faction is sitting, members of nucleus families of the other faction would not sit. They would not exchange greetings. Everybody would try never to let his cattle nor himself go to the fields belonging to the other faction. They would not sell or buy things from one another. They would not rent or borrow land. They would not participate in any social ceremony with them. They would not even perform the "id" and the usual prayers together. Even on sad occasions like a funeral the hostility would persist. Attempts would be made to cause harm to the other faction whenever possible, openly or secretly; false rumours, damaging the honour of the other group would be spread; stories of sexual infidelity coined and circulated. Efforts would be made whenever possible to turn any benefit of the others into a loss. False evidence and sometimes fictitious suits would be lodged to harm the others.

(Sociologus Vol. 8; 1958; 176-8)

A second way in which the significance of links between an individual and his bhauki is evident, is, in what might be called "caste psychology". By this I mean that members of a bhauki and subcaste cultivate a thought pattern which classifies the word into "one's own caste" and those "not in one's own caste", the "we group" and "they group". This thinking has been extended to regions and states and what Srinivas calls "caste fusion"

as communications improve (ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 199). The caste associations reported in Maharashtra and elsewhere in India are probably the embodiments of this psychology.

It is necessary here to take note of "Structures of Politics in the Villages of Southern Asia", a recent paper by Nicholas. He begins by locating the social cleavages which organize political conflict. He identifies two ideal types of cleavages, vertical and horizontal. Vertical cleavages divide structurally equivalent political groups, and horizontal cleavages divide super and subordinate groups from one another. He shows the relationship between some crucial features of village social structure and the direction of political cleavage. His conclusions which he draws from data from nineteen villages in India are as follows:

There are two factors, found repeatedly in Indian villages, which are conducive to the development of vertical political cleavages: a.) considerable dispersal of agricultural lands among cultivating families as is found, ideally, under ryotwari land tenure, and b.) a dominant caste group that is a majority of the village population. A combination of these two factors is ordinarily associated with political conflict between factions.

A second set of factors, often closely associated with one another also frequently leads to vertical political cleavages; these are joint, or mahalwari land tenure, by a dominant caste group organized on segmentary lineage principles. Each of the vertically divided political groups in this case is generally composed of a patrilineal segment of the dominant caste group, often localized in a "quarter" of the village, and its servants and dependents among the subordinate castes...

Political conflict between stratified groups, horizontally divided from one another, is the least frequent form in contemporary South Asian villages. Such conflict is most often associated with concentration of agricultural land in the hands of one or a few individuals as is found, ideally, under zamindari land tenure, and/or dominance of a village by a minority caste.

(ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 279-80).

Nicholas also discusses Tararwala, a village in Punjab West Pakistan.

The village has a mahalwari system of land tenure. He writes:

Exclusively on the basis of present caste composition, one might expect most political conflict in the West Punjab village of Tararwala to occur between the dominant Tarar zamindari caste (8 per cent) and the low ranking but numerous Masalli (19 per cent).

He goes on to say that conflict in this village occurs between patti (relatively self sufficient section of a village ) based factions rather than between the super and the subordinate "castes". He gives three reasons for this apparently anomalous situation.

1. Land is actually held by members of several different zamindari castes collectively termed Jat (probably). Jat - comprising 38 per cent of the village population and occasionally intermarrying with one another.
2. Most families of subordinate kamin castes are individually tied to households of zamindari castes and thereby to pattis rather than to their village caste group.
3. Before 1947 the village was 30 per cent Hindu. The Hindus inhabited a major patti of the village; their departure must have worked a great change in village political alignments (1968: 278).

These conclusions clearly show the importance of the size of a caste and the form of a land tenure in political cleavages. However, as I have discussed in the final section, kinship and religion are also very significant in political activity and it is in these respects that social hierarchies in India differ from those in Pakistan. Here it is sufficient to quote Nicholas once again:

Careful study of a few cases of Indian village politics has recently led Bailey to conclude that all political conflict groups in these villages are factions; that is, in no case can all leader-follower ties be accounted for on the basis of a single structural principle or a single kind of recruitment. (ed. Singer and Cohen, 1968: 278).

Before concluding the present section let me briefly answer the questions posed in regard to the analysis of a political hierarchy.

The Rajputs occupy the highest position because they are the wealthiest. The fact that they spend more than other castes and are less exclusive make their style of life suited to political primacy. Further, their ritual rank and their traditional callings as rulers, warriors and landowners legitimize their political primacy in the eyes of the people. Again, they are better organized and have better leadership and experience in political affairs than any other caste in the village.

The high rank of the Rajputs in the political hierarchy is achieved in so far as they become the largest landowners and thereby exercised political power. The position of those low in the political hierarchy, particularly the Harijans, is ascribed in so far as their ritual roles are incompatible with roles of political leaders.

Hinduism is a significant element of the political hierarchy. This is manifested as follows:

a.) The ritual roles of unclean castes strongly militate against free social interaction with clean castes.

b.) An individual is ritually bound up with his agnates and this makes it extremely difficult for him to move up in the political hierarchy. He is identified with his sub-caste and therefore mobility has to be a group phenomenon.

c.) Intra-caste ritual ties and intercaste rules governing commensality and social interaction determine very largely the composition

of group organized for political action. This explains why political groups tend to follow caste lines.

## ECONOMIC HIERARCHY

In all probability each caste in Gaon followed the occupation with which it is traditionally associated at one point in history. The landowning castes were economically higher than craftsmen or specialists in that period. This is because the landowners had direct access to resources and the others were dependent upon them. Thus the Rajputs and Marathas being landowners were higher than all other castes in the village. Their economic position was higher because i.e. Brahman, Temple-priest, Goldsmith, Potters, Water-carrier, Barber, Blacksmith, Washerman, Basket-maker, Leather-worker, Scavenger, Watchman and Rope-maker received baluta from them. This payment was made in the form of fixed share in the harvest. It seems that with the passage of time this economic setup underwent many changes. In the first place, many of the hitherto dependents castes also acquired some land. These days almost each caste belongs to this land-owning category. The case of the Brahmans is particularly notable because they are one of the three wealthiest castes in the village (the others being Rajputs and Marathas) and yet they still receive baluta.

Another change in the economic set-up during the past years has been a gradual disassociation between a caste and its traditional occupation mostly in favor of agriculture. For example, five households of the Potter caste in a total of nine, have totally abandoned their traditional calling. One of the two Watchmen households has also abandoned its caste occupation. Again, in a total of thirteen households of Leather-workers only three are carrying on with the calling of their caste. Further, twelve of twenty-four Scavenger households work as agricultural labourers and



four in a total of twenty-two households of Rope-makers have taken to agriculture as a fulltime occupation. One of the Rope-makers is working as a Barber in Mot.

These changes have upset the old economic hierarchy. The hitherto dependent castes are becoming increasingly independent. This is evident from a rapid decline of baluta. Orienstein reported in 1961 that "the baluta system was nearly entirely destroyed". (P. 293).

The old economic hierarchy is being threatened from another direction also. There is an increasing tendency on the part of the hitherto economically dependent castes to form cooperative societies and thus to raise their caste in the economic hierarchy. The Rope-makers are an example of this kind. They are planning to purchase on cooperative basis a rope-making machine. The Bagdis of Gaon are another example. In 1961, their plans to form a cooperative society were under way.

An approximate economic hierarchy in Gaon is as follows:

TABLE 4 - Caste Wealth in 1,000's of rupees

Caste	Average Wealth by Household
Brahman	26.72
Rajput	20.80
Watchman	12.25
Maratha	10.11
Potter	4.92
Temple Priest	4.48
Leather Worker	3.88
Blacksmith	3.43
Scavenger	2.82
Washerman	0.80
Water Carrier	0.78
Barber	0.53
Goldsmith	0.30
Rope Maker	0.13

Is the economic hierarchy in Gaon a product of rational economic motivation? Many writers would answer this in the negative. For example, commenting on jajmani (baluta) relations Naktipur and Sherupur Gould writes that there is no rational motivation in the traditional jajmani relations. He concludes:

Jajmani system persists because it maintains the status of social interaction that are essential for rural Hinduism...The jajmani system persisted in British times in spite of vicissitudes, because it did not depend upon the political superstructure, but upon the survival of Hinduism. Being a jajman meant being an orthodox Hindu whose value system made necessary the engagement of certain specialists. It continues because of the motivation of the peasantry to practice orthodox Hinduism quite apart from the wealth that can be gained in it. The jajmani system is not the exploitation of feudalism, but the mutual wish to practice certain rituals and a way of life necessitating the avoidance of impurity. (1964, 38-9).

Mathur supports Gould's views to a certain degree. He outlines a hierarchy of occupations and suggests that at the top of the hierarchy are those occupations prescribed for the Brahman, namely, temple and domestic priesthood, astrology and scholarship. These callings are very pure and do not involve occupational pollution. The second category of occupations includes soldiering, administration and land ownership. These occupations are not as pure as those of the Brahmans, because they involve killing, injuring, or harming living beings.

Trade and shop keeping comes next on the hierarchy of occupation, both these involve impure activities, such as dealing with oils, jagari, and spices.

The third category of occupations in the hierarchy consists of cultivating, tailoring, blacksmithing, carpentry and pottery-making. These occupations are ritually pure but somewhat "lowly". Cultivation involves injuring the earth, a Blacksmith has to use bellows made of hide and the Carpenter and Potter kill the insects in the wood and clay.

Barbering is ranked next in the hierarchy of occupation. A Barber cuts the hair and massages the limbs of his clients. This involvement with human body makes a Barber's occupation lower than the craftsmen.

Begging as an occupation is next in the hierarchy provided a person begs from the clean castes only. This is important because begging from unclean castes as does the ascetic Nath Jogi makes the status of the begger unclean.

The Drummer's occupation is impure because he comes into contact with animal skin and works even for untouchables.

The Oil-presser who ranks next in the hierarchy is also regarded impure because his occupation involves intentional killing of life in the seeds.

Cloth-weaving is regarded impure because the Weaver has to use a bow made of animal tissues.

Washerman's occupation ranks next because he washes soiled garments including those worn by people during ritual pollution.

Basket-weaving and matmaking are impure because they involve handling of palm leaves and stalks which are intrinsically impure.

Working with leather is impure but skinning and tanning have a higher degree of impurity because these occupations require handling of dead animals.

Scavenging is regarded as a very highly impure occupation because Scavenger has to remove night soil, and to castrate calves, thus killing life germs of the extremely sacred cow. (1964: 153-6).

Elsewhere Mathur summarises his views as follows:

Restated so as to appear as a ritual prohibition, this rule would mean that "ritually clean" castes are prohibited from taking to "impure or very impure" callings, ritually unclean castes are forbidden to follow both the pure and the very impure callings; the castes that are considered to be ritually untouchable must not pursue callings or trades which are "pure" or "impure". (1958: 57)

He further adds that agriculture as a calling is an exception and is open to all castes. Thus, he recognizes a limited role of rational economic motivation.

Hocart, Thurston, and Leach also recognize ritual factors in economic hierarchy though in a somewhat different way. Theoretically the kamins (i.e. the craftsmen) have a monopoly over functions (Hocart: 1950: 48-9) The purifying functions of the Washerman give him some power (Thurston: 1909:269). In the case of a class society, the majority competes for the favors of a wealthy minority, whereas in the case of caste the minority competes for the services of the majority (Leach: 1960: 10).

I shall now consider how far does the evidence from Gaon support the views mentioned above. It indicates that a need for self sufficiency arose due to ecological factors. Relatively isolated as were the villages it was important for the farmers to have craftsmen at hand. Payments were made in kind at the time of harvest because it was convenient for the farmers. It also suited the craftsmen because baluta give them economic security. Probably that is why with the advent of improved communications and cash crops, as in the case in Gaon, baluta has almost disappeared (P. 293). It persists in those villages where there are no cash crops.

Again, there is nothing to prove that each caste has followed an occupation according to its "innate purity" without any change. There have been many upheavals and migrations in the past and it is hard to maintain that the occupation with which a caste is associated today has remained unchanged in the long course of history. Exigencies of circumstances, economic opportunities, political dominance or subordination are important factors and may not be ruled out. The examples of Leather-workers, Potters and the Rope-maker, who has become a Barber, show that rational economic motivation is significant in the choice of occupations and consequently in the economic hierarchy. Thus Gould's views cannot be substantiated in the case of Gaon.

The assertions of Hocart, Thurston, and Leach also do not find support from Gaon. The cases of Scavengers and Rope-makers are two examples which show that the craftsmen do not have much power. As has been

mentioned earlier the original Scavenger bhauki refused to work. The landowners imported another Scavenger bhauki in the community. Official records pertaining to traditional rights confirm this. There is but one bhauki listed for 1874 , two for 1884. (P. 65). Similarly the Rope-makers decided to purchase a rope-making machine in 1954. They needed the signatures of the patil in order to get a loan from the government for this purpose. The patil refused to accede to their request and they were not able to buy the rope making machine at that time. (P. 263).

Unlike the views of the above writers, those of Mathur do explain economic mobility in Gaon, though only partially. Almost all the castes have increasingly taken to agriculture. Particularly notable are the Brahmans who once were dependent and are now one of the wealthiest in the village. Notable too is the Scavenger caste. In Table 4 their position is ninth in the village and rank higher than five castes, four of them being ritually higher than the Scavengers. Agriculture has played a major role in their economic mobility. Thus far, Mathur's views are supported, but the position is different if one argues that this does not prove conclusively his contention that ritual factors limit choice of occupations. Can it not be justifiably maintained that agriculture was the principal road to economic mobility open to any caste irrespective of its ritual status? And further that economic mobility would not be through agriculture, were the modern economic opportunities, political security, and improved communications made available to Gaon a hundred years earlier. Judging from the cases of Leather-workers who opened a shop in Bombay

and the Porter who became an employee in a cloth shop in Mot and the Mratha who became a tailor and the Rope-maker who became a Barber, it may be concluded that economic mobility does not seem to follow any rigid rules and further that most certainly rational economic motivation is one of the elements of economic hierarchy.

Another element in the economic hierarchy is the identification of individuals. Who eats with whom, who is willing to give spouses to one's children and what is one's occupation? An individual may change his occupation because he happens to be a man of initiative and enterprise and becomes wealthy, but it is not possible for him, all by himself, to choose groups for commensal and affinal relations. His acceptance in any group for these purposes depends upon how he is identified. This is why he sets about raising ritual and economic standards of his bhauki members along with his own. All economic upward mobility is a group affair and not an individual affair. This explains why the newly acquired wealth of the Leather-worker of Gaon brought about a general rise in the economic level of the caste of Leather-worker as a whole. This also explains why Gagdis and the Rope-makers are also forming cooperative societies on caste lines. It would be incorrect to equate caste associations with welfare societies because of the reasons for the formation of the two types are different.

To conclude: the various positions in the economic hierarchy are achieved in so far as there is an evidence of rational economic motivation. The positions are also ascribed.

It seems like that<sup>if</sup> the secular aspect of rank was primary in mobility and often of much significance in rank, the very basis of rank was vital(pollution). High status, even if achieved largely by secular means, was always asserted through exclusiveness in the matter of vital. (P. 148).

The importance of religion as a factor in the economic hierarchy is evident from the fact that it necessitates a collective action on the part of a bhauki in situations involving social mobility.

In recent years many new castes have come to live in the village. These are Mali, Dhanger, Bhoi, Badari, Ghadsi, Holar, Mang Garudi (Table 2). The occupations which these castes pursue were hitherto not followed by anyone in the village. Surely these occupations were not unknown to the villagers nor would it be correct to say that the occupations are economically worthless, the recent immigrants would not have followed them. The only plausible explanation of the question, why did anyone from the old residents not change over to one of these new occupations, appears to be that the necessary action in this direction was not taken by any bahuki in Gaon.



CASTE AND KINSHIP

IN

CENTRAL INDIA

BY

ADRIAN C. MAYER

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<sup>E</sup>  
~~B~~ARKELEY AND LOS ANGELES 1960

## RAMKHERI

Ramkheri is situated seven miles from Dewas Town, the capital of Dewas Senior State, before its merger into the Indian Union. In 1955 the population of the village was 912 persons. The caste composition of the village is given below:

TABLE 5 -

<u>CASTE NAME</u>		<u>POPULATION</u>
Khati	Farmer	181
Rajputs	Landowners, Warriors	118
Balai	Weaver	85
Chamar	Tanner	69
Bhilala		64
Gosain		45
Teli	Oil-presser	29
Brahman		28
Ahir	Dairyman	26
Sutar	Carpenter	25
Nai	Barber	14
Nath		14
Kumawat	Tobacco-curer	14
Mali	Gardner	13
Gari	Goatherd	10
Darzi	Tailor	9
Balai Babaji		9
Kumhar	Potter	9
Bhangi	Sweeper	8
Mina		8
Lohar	Blacksmith	8
Doli	Drummer	8
Bairagi		5
Bargunda	Basket-maker	5
Bharbunjya	Grain-parcher	2
		<u>806</u>
	Non-Hindus	<u>106</u>
	Total	912

Ramkheri has a nucleated form of settlement. It is roughly divided into about twelve wards. There are two main areas of Rajput habitation, in the places where the headmen first settled. Around the Rajput houses are dwellings of allied castes. There is a strong tendency on the part of castes of roughly equal ritual purity to live in the same locality, and, it is clear which caste provides the nucleus in any ward. But in the Harijan wards there is clear separation, both from other castes and between the Harijan castes themselves.

## POLITICAL HIERARCHY IN RAMKHERI

Before 1946 during the days of the Maharaja's rule political leadership in Ramkheri clearly rested with the Rajputs. The village had four headmen, all Rajputs. The headman wielded great authority and enjoyed a considerable measure of independence in those times. In relation to the Maharaja he was a kind of viceroy and was permitted to administer the village without interference so long as he continued to pay an annual nazrana and taxes to the darbar (royal court) and kept the village at peace. That he might have a high status outside the village too, can be seen from the fact that the headman of village Hung in Malwa was a general of the Maratha armies who was granted land in recognition of his military services (S. W. Gazetteer, Vo. V: 1908). The headman was usually a powerful landowner and within the village besides being the representative of the Maharaja, acted as the principal link between the village and the court. It was customary for the influential men of the village to sit in a council under his chairmanship to discuss ways and means for the implementation of the Maharaja's orders. One of his acknowledged functions was arbitration in intercaste disputes. Sometimes through his personal influence he brought about settlements. His other functions included the supervision of the village festivals and worship in forty-two shrines on behalf of the village whenever there was a cattle epidemic. These official and unofficial duties brought him into contact with almost everybody in the village thereby giving him a thorough knowledge of its people.

In performing his duties he was assisted by the village servants, theoretically twelve in number, the barabalauti (Census of India, 1931 Pt. 1:10). The patwari (village accountant) assisted the headman in the maintenance of records related to ownership of land and taxes. The village servants were paid in kind and some were remunerated by watan holdings (rent-free land).

The fact that the headman was a Rajput, raised the political rank of the Rajput caste as a whole. Mayer states that the influence of these Rajput leaders spread to the rest of the caste group. This was partly because the group was to some extent seen as undifferentiated by the rest of the village, and partly it was due to conscious efforts by all caste members to share in the prestige of their ruling caste mates. This tendency existed whether the caste members were wealthy and well regarded in the Rajput caste group or not. In Ramkheri even the poor relations of the headmen tended to act as leaders. For the Rajputs, village leadership was a caste thing, for the other castes it seems to have been the role of one or two big men of the caste. (P. 113). For instance some years ago there was an influential Cotton-carder whose advise was taken, and also some Oil-pressers and Farmers acted as arbitrators in disputes.

Constitutional changes introduced from time to time after 1946 have tended to upset the old political hierarchy. In the first place the headman has lost much of his authority and is now a salaried official with little more than ordinary routine duties. In the second place, adult franchise and creation of rural local bodies have opened channels to positions of power

and influence to all castes. For example during the first elections to the Village Committee (Ganv Panchayat) held in 1946, only three Rajputs were elected in a total of eight. The remaining five comprised, one Brahman, one Farmer, one Trader, a Cotton-carder and an Oil-presser. The Oil-presser was elected chairman of the committee. During the 1951 elections one in a total of four members was a Balai Babaji, one a Brahman and the remaining two were Rajputs. During 1956 elections one in a total of five members was a Bhilala, one a Cotton-carder, one a Brahman, and the remaining two were Rajputs.

These developments indicate that the Rajputs are no longer regarded as the sole legitimate political leaders. That such a change in political hierarchy is taking roots is evident from the ineffective boycott of an Oil-presser on the part of the Rajput-dominated Comprehensive Committee.\*

This Oil-presser was boycotted soon after the installation of first elected Village Committee in 1946. In earlier times a boycotted man had no alternative but to leave the village. In this case, however, the boycott has been weathered successfully and the boycotted man is not only living in the village, but has also a group of supporters numbering about a dozen.

Yet the Rajputs still have primacy in Ramkheri as well as in the sub-district. In both the most recent Village Committees the same Rajput has been the chairman and most powerful member. Again there was a high

\* The Comprehensive Committee also called Sarvjanik Samiti was formed by the villagers six months after the first elections. It has 43 members representing all wards in the village.

percentage of Rajput chairmen in 53 Village Committees in the subdistrict.

TABLE 6

Caste	Number of V C Chairmen (1956)	%
Rajput	20	38
Khati	12	23
Kalota	4	7
Brahman	8	15
Naita	-	-
Dakar	2	4
Other	7	13
Total	53	100

Still again, the Rajputs was disproportionately better represented in the Central Committee.

TABLE 7

Caste	Number of C C Members 1956	%
Rajputs	20	38
Khati	5	9
Kalota	3	6
Brahman	8	15
Naita, Dakkar & Others	17	32
Total	53	100

To sum up; The Rajputs are at the head of the political hierarchy. Next to them are the "clean castes" and lowest in the hierarchy are the "unclean castes". Recently the authority of the Rajputs was challenged by an Oil-presser with a group of supporters, but so far there is no serious threat to the primacy of the Rajputs.



## B

In this section I offer an explanation of the political hierarchy in Ramkheri. Wealth is an element of major importance in political hierarchy. The Rajputs are biggest landholders in Ramkheri and this one fact contributes very largely to their political power. Srinivas observes that landownership is a crucial factor in establishing dominance (1966: 12). Wiser remarks about the landowners are that they are so sure of their power they make no effort to display it. Yet, if one of them appears among men of working castes the latter express respect and fear in every guarded word and gesture (1951: 18-19).

A number of practices on the part of the Rajputs contribute toward their dominant political position. They tended to spend lavishly on marriage ceremonies and on funerary feasts and purificatory rites. Contrasted to the almost equally wealthy Farmers, who combined both rites as a money saving device, the Rajput performed these rites separately and invited more guests. Again, they did not engage in money lending possibly because it was considered mean. Their payments to the jajmans were proportionately larger than those of others, demonstrating thereby their ability and willingness to spend more than other castes. Still again they were least exclusive. They had liberal commensal habits and permitted the allied castes to eat in the same pangat, (line of persons at a meal). This practice held out the promise of equality to lower caste.

It seems that political hierarchy is disturbed if the roles are no longer clustered and the system is not involute on account of influences from

outside the village. The political primacy of the Rajputs has been successfully challenged by an Oil-presser. This has been possible because he had relevant political relations with authorities in Dewas Town and also because he did not demand on the village for his living.

Religion is another element of major importance in the political hierarchy. This is evident in the following ways:

1.) Hinduism makes a distinction between "clean" and "unclean" castes and lays down dharma or rules of conduct for each. The role of the "unclean castes" involves relatively unclean occupations, restrictions on access to village temples, as well as restrictions upon free commensal relations and interactions with "clean castes". This makes the role of the "unclean castes" incompatible with roles of political dominance over "clean castes". Empirical evidence from the caste composition of 246 headmen in 233 villages during the days of the Maharaja's rule supports this conclusion. All but 1.6 percent were "clean caste". Presumably, the Bhilala headmen represented these villages in which the population was made up of "unclean castes" only.

TABLE 8

<u>Caste</u>	<u>Number of Headmen</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Rajput	102	41.5
Khati	29	11.8
Kalota	222	9.0
Brahman	19	7.7
Naita	17	6.9
Dakkar	13	5.3
Muslim	8	3.2
Kumawat	6	2.4
Deshwali	4	1.6
Bhilala	4	1.6
Other (less than 4)	<u>22</u>	<u>9.0</u>
	246	100.0

13 villages have more than one headman, each of different caste. This explains why there are 246 headmen in 233 villages (Mayer, 1963: 92).

The political implication of the ritual disabilities of the "unclean castes" left them with two courses of actions. They could either continue to remain in their politically subordinate position. Alternatively it was necessary for them to improve their ritual status before they could perform any role of political dominance. This probably explains why the opportunities offered by universal enfranchisement these days are accompanied by efforts on the part of the "unclean castes" to upgrade

themselves in the ritual hierarchy, through what has been called sanskritization. An example of such efforts in the Bhilala caste in Ramkheri. They claim a Rajput descent and have abandoned many of their ritually unclean habits. However, even before the universal enfrenchisement it would be incorrect to state that in the field of religion and politics, we cannot say that cooperation entails the summation of roles and therefore caste refers to ritual status alone and so ignore its organizing role for political groups.

2.) Dharma lays down rules for the individual as well as for the caste. Membership to a caste may be obtained by birth alone. Marriage may be contracted with a person of one's own subcaste and from a different gotra than one's own. Marriage of the children may not take place without ensuring that the ascendants of their spouses were of one's own subcaste and of correct gotra. One is linked with one's own agnates in more than one way. He worships a common Clan Goddess and a common Bheru. In case of the death of anyone of the agnates, he is polluted for a specific period and has to undergo purificatory and funerary rites. It is the duty of the caste members to see that no infringement of these rules takes place, and no member is accepted until he has fulfilled the prescribed conditions. The castes have therefore set up caste councils both in the village as well as in groups of village (pankhera). Cases of infringement of caste rules and inter-caste disputes are placed before these councils, thereby enforcing agnatic ties. The political implications of these rules have resulted in an inability on the part of individuals to attain vertical mobility. All

political vertical mobility must take place in groups. There is not a single instance of vertical mobility on the part of an individual in all the history of Ramkheiri. The Oil-pressers as a group however, have moved up in ritual, economic and political hierarchies.

3.) Dharma is a major determinant of the composition of what might constitute a group organized for political action. Ritual duties and obligations toward agnate militate against segmentation in the subcastes on the village level and even beyond. For example the Rajput were made up of two clans Chauhan and Solanki, each with branches A and B. In the past Chauhan A has sometimes been alone, opposed by Chauhan B together with Solanki A and B; and there has also been times when Chauhan A and B stood united against Solanki A and B. That factions tend to follow agnatic links wherever these are available to followers within the village context of kinship is also exemplified by the factions headed by Ambaram and Ramnath in the Farmer caste. Again, quarrels among Bhilala tend to divide the subcaste into the clan groups, each with its linked households. Yet it is noteworthy that outsiders have always regarded these castes as homogeneous units. This is presumably because of close interaction within the group for ritual purposes in spite of their factions. The Rajputs are an example. The emergence of jati sangh (caste associations) appear also to be founded upon the ritual ties. Again, the disproportionately high representation of Rajputs in the local bodies as well as the apparent partiality manifested by the Rajput dominated Central Committee toward Rajput villages in the allocation of funds (Tables 9 and 10), indicate that groups organized for

political activities follow caste lines. The political implications of this form of political organization are that the village is horizontally divided into a number of social strata competing against each other.

TABLE 9

<u>Headman's Caste</u>	<u>Per capita allocation standardized in Rs</u>		
	Plan I	Plan II	Percentage Increase
Rajput	4.29	6.91	61.1
Khati	2.12	4.12	94.3
Kalota	3.40	4.94	45.3
Brahman	6.35	4.79	-24.6
Naita	3.09	2.36	-23.6
Dakkar	4.57	3.22	-20.5
Other	2.39	3.99	66.9

TABLE 10

Average per capita allocation  
(Standardized) in Rs

<u>Caste of V C Chairman</u>	Plan I	Plan II	Percentage Increase <sup>r</sup>
Rajput	4.30	5.68	32.1
Kalota	5.33	5.35	168.8
Brahman	3.84	4.44	15.6
Naita	2.87	----	----
Other	3.14	4.48	43.7

## ECONOMIC HIERARCHY

Like most of the villages in India, Ramkheri is an agricultural village. The overwhelming influence of agriculture is shown by the fact that the total number of men traditionally of agricultural castes (Farmers, Gardener, etc.) is only 69 whereas there are 162 men who are primarily or secondarily farmers. Moreover, of the 40 men who may be classified as non-agriculturist some have interest in land which they lease to others. Therefore one's position in the economic hierarchy may be measured according to his relationship with land. (P. 78).

Generally speaking relationship of caste to land is either direct or indirect. Those in the former category are landowners, tenants and farm labourers. Those in the later category are craftsmen. In recent years a third category largely dependent upon the income not derived from the village has come to exist. Details regarding these categories are given in Table 11.

TABLE 11 - Landowners

The following Table shows the average land held by each caste.

Caste	Area Held Per Head	Caste	Area Held Per Head
Rajput	21.76	Weaver	3.05
Gosain	14.06	Tailor	2.98
Farmer	10.07	Mina	2.76
Fakir	9.99	Bairagi	2.69
Brahman	9.51	Potter	2.67
Gardener	7.50	Balai Babaji	1.68
Oil-presser	7.30	Drummer	1.12
Goatherder	5.87	Carpenter	1.11
Tobacco-curer	5.39	Nath	0.83
Cotton-carder	4.55	Sweeper	0.82
Dairyman	4.11	Blacksmith	0.73
Barber	3.58	Tanner	0.20



TABLE 12 - Tenant and Farm Labourers

As small landowners find it uneconomical to maintain draught animals and equipment, they give their fields on lease to landowners with larger areas. Consequently, tenants and landowners happen to be the same individuals and therefore the case of the tenant need not be considered here. The caste of the farm labourers employed in 1956 - 7 is given below:

Brahman	1
Rajput	2
Khati	3
Dairyman	1
Kumawat	1
Cotton-carder	4
Bhilala	1
Nath	1
Drummer	1
Weaver	6
Tanner	3
	<hr/>
Total	24

### Craftsmen

Those included in this category are the Blacksmith, the Carpenter, the Barber, the Potter, the Drummer, the Tanner and the Sweeper. They are indirectly dependent upon land because payment to them are made partly in cash by the farmers. Payment in kind are made annually per plough for services agreed upon between the farmers and the craftsmen; cash payments are made for extra work. All craftsmen do not receive equal payment in kind. (Table 13). Presumably the Blacksmith and the Carpenter who receive more than others are regarded most useful in this category. The Tailor who is also a craftsman is usually paid in cash on piece work basis.

<u>TABLE 13</u> <u>Item</u>	<u>Blacksmith</u> <u>Carpenter</u>	<u>Barber</u>	<u>Tanner</u>	<u>Potter</u> <u>Drummer</u>
(Approximate Weight)				
Sorghum(harvest)-sheaves	2	2	2	2
Sorghum(threshing)-sheaves	4	4	4	2
Sorghum(clean) grain-lb.	50	20	20	10
Unrefined sugar - lb.	10	10	3	3
Peanut (unshelled)-lb.	20	20	20	10
Maize-cobs	50	30	30	20
Wheat(clean-grain)-lb. (at sowing time)	10	5	5	5
Wheat(threshing)-lb.	5	5	5	5
Pulse harvest - lb.	10	5	5	5

The mangat (literally meaning alms-takers) is a group of priests who make their living partly through farming land attached with the shrines which they serve and partly by receiving uncooked and cooked food from the farmers. In the later capacity they may be placed in the category of craftsmen. This group includes the Gosain, the village priest, the Bairaigi, the Nath, and the Balai Babaji. These days the <sup>0</sup>Gosains have become landowners (Table 11) and though theoretically in the mangat category they are not so in practice. The village priest performs important rituals for the whole village and is therefore paid more than other priests. "Without him life could not be conducted properly, and he is as necessary as the carpenter, etc." (P. 71).

#### Others

This category consists of members of different castes. Strictly speaking they have become and are in the process of becoming independent of the village economy.

They include 4 Oil-pressers, 2 Gardeners, 4 Farmers, 2 Dairymen, and one each of Mina, Cotton-carder, Brahman, Gosain and Barber. These comprise 2 Schoolmasters, 6 Village accountants, 3 High school or college students, 2 Traders, 1 Army, 1 Police, 2 Factory workers.

Keeping the above facts in view the economic hierarchy appears to be as follows:

The Rajputs are the wealthiest and at the head of the economic hierarchy. This is because their average landownership exceeds that of all other castes. This is also manifested by the number of animals they owned in 1955-6. Twenty-four Rajputs had 83 head of cattle, as compared to forty-two Farmers who had only 103 animals and sixteen Balais who had 21 animals.

Next to the Rajputs may be ranked the Gosains, the Farmers and the Oil-pressers. This is because the Gosains and the Farmers rank second and third in landownership, while the Oil-pressers derive their income from land as well as from white collar jobs.

Next to the Oil-presser may be ranked craftsmen and other clean castes. The Harijans are lowest in the economic hierarchy, their average landownership being 1.62 acres.

## B

In this section the first question to be answered is "why do the groups occupy the position which they do in the economic hierarchy? In other words the fact that "clean castes" particularly Rajputs are higher in the hierarchy and that the "unclean castes" are at the foot of the hierarchy must be explained. An explanation appears to lie in the political conditions in Central India during the last century. The region in which Ramkheri is situated was in a state of disorder and anarchy. Writing about the prevailing conditions in Dewas Malcolm remarks:

The Puars of Dewas have suffered throughout the last thirty years of extreme misery. They have been, in fact, the sport of every change. With territories situated in the most distracted part of Central India, and unable to maintain any force, they have alternately been plundered and oppressed, not only by the governments of Sindia and Holker but....every freebooter of the day. A detail of their history during the last twenty-five years leaves an impression of wonder at their being in existence, or having an inhabited village in their country. (1824, Vol. 1: 113).

Under these circumstances only a well organized and numerically strong group could own land and make a living through agriculture. It seems that one of the reasons why Ramkheri Rajputs were successfully able to hold out under such adverse conditions was the fact that they had the support of their caste fellows in the seven neighboring villages. Probably there was also a mutual support between the Rajputs and the allied caste dominated villages around Ramkheri,

The Farmers started moving in the village soon after the turn of the century. They moved in only gradually probably because they were un-

certain of the outcome. Had they been more confident, agriculture being their traditional calling, they would have acquired more land which was relatively easily available in these days. However with increasing political stability and better prices they grew in numbers and though they are numerically the largest caste in the village their earlier lack of confidence and interest in acquisition of larger acreage has given them only a secondary position in the economic hierarchy.

The indirect dependence upon land on the part of craftsmen and the ritually "unclean castes" is due to many factors. The Rajput landowners disliked the ritually inferior castes to acquire land and to pose a threat to them and therefore forced them out of their holdings. Again, these castes have neither the skill nor the experience necessary to make agriculture a profitable project. They found it economically better to exchange their services with sure income in forms of grains at the time of harvest.

A second explanation to the question why do the caste occupy the position which they do in the economic hierarchy lies in the role of caste. In Hutton's words:

From the point of view of the individual member of a caste the system provides him from birth with a fixed social milieu from which neither wealth nor poverty, success nor disaster can remove him, unless of course he so violates the standards of behavior laid down by his caste that it spews him forth temporarily or permanently. He is provided in this way with a permanent body of associations which controls almost all his behavior and contacts. His caste canalizes his choice in marriage, acts as his trade union, his friendly or benefit society, his slate club and his orphanage; it takes the place for him of health insurance and if need be provides for his funeral. It frequently determines his occupation. (1963: 111).

In practice subcaste or jati is the effective group. Mandelbaum writes that:

A child learns quite early to discriminate between his own kind and those of other jatis who have different degrees of pollution and with whom his interplay must be more guarded. He absorbs the self image of his jati in countless ways. A boy of a Rajput jati learns about the martial style and regal tradition of his group by the bearing of his elders, by their contemptuous references to those of other jatis by the tales, proverbs, and bellada he heard frequently. Even the lowest jatis have explanatory tales of how they fell from a higher state through no great fault of their own.

Further:

Yet even in a loosely organized jati there is <sup>a</sup> joint response in certain situation. The people of a jati do not march always as a close social company, hewing to a set direction, fulfilling given directions, and mechanically correcting deviations. There are often considerable differences within a jati in wealth and power, in goals and ideals. In certain matters, modes of worship for example, there can be quite considerable deviation. But in other affairs, particularly in those which have to do with permanent pollution, jati members impose sharp limits on deviation. Pollution affects the external relations of all in a jati, and when they feel that they are collectively confronting others, they tend to act as a unified social group (Ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 38-9).

Quarrels within a jati may draw on for months, sometimes years, until both parties are weary or kinship or ceremonial obligations draw them together again (Gough, 1955:44).

An important link among kinsmen is the "relation pollution". "When a birth or death occurs in ego's kin group he is subject to relational pollution. He is defiled for a stipulated period of time varying with his genealogical distance from the deceased or new born. Defilement is believed to spread through the kin group, which is conceived in the words

of Mitakshra, as "connected by particles of the same body". Relational pollution is incurred neither through ego's actions nor through the actions of others upon him; he is simply the recipient of defilement by virtue of his biological phenomena". "Ego's relational defilement is inversely proportionate to his caste rank; that is the higher the rank the less the defilement in case of a birth or death. Brahmans are usually said to be polluted for ten days, Kshatriyas for twelve days, Vaishyas for fifteen, and Sudraa for thirty". (Ed. Singer and Coh, 1968: 116).

Importance of ritual caste obligations has been noted by Milton Singer. He made a study of a number of successful industrial leaders in Madras. He found that while there were striking changes within three generations in residential, occupational, educational and social mobility, as well as in patterns of ritual observances, these changes have not transformed the traditional joint family structure into isolated nuclear families.

He writes:

Until quite recently a prevailing sociological theory asserted that the joint and extended family structure was everywhere and inevitably transformed into nuclear family structure under the influence of urbanization and industrialization.

Further:

The home is culturally defined as the domain of one's family, one's caste, one's religious community; and the norms appropriate to these groups are in operation there. The office and factory, on the other hand, are defined as a domain which includes non-relatives, other castes and relations communities, and foreigners.



He concludes:

Compartmentalization is an adaptive process which permits the incorporation of innovative patterns of thought and behavior associated with modern industry without too direct a collision with traditional modes of thought and behavior. So long as the rest of the family is maintaining the traditional observances, the industrial leader, and his employees as well, feel free to depart from the traditional patterns in the office, in the factory, on trips abroad, and elsewhere outside of the home. (Ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 438-9), (443-46).

I give views of Hutton, Nicholas, Orenstein and Singer regarding links which unit members of a subcaste to support my contention that social mobility on the part of an individual is extremely difficult in a caste society. It requires action in groups. Such actions usually involve changes in occupation of the group concerned and possibly the emergence of a new caste. For example if a section of Carpenter subcaste takes to agriculture as their primary occupation the new group may be distinguished from the Carpentring-carpenters as Agriculturist-carpenters (P. 90). Kaibarttas of Bengal offers another example. Occupationally they were fisherman and were known as Jaliya Kaibartta (Kaibarttas who work in water), a section of the subcaste abandoned fishing and become agriculturists. This resulted in the fission of the subcaste and the founding of a new subcaste, the Haliya Kaibarttas (Kaibarttas who work with plough), (Hutton, 1963:51-2).

The conclusions which I draw from what has been stated above are that the low positions which the various castes occupy in the economic hierarchy in Ramkheri are very largely due to the fact that they did not or perhaps could not act as a group to change their occupation and hence change

their positions in the ritual and economic hierarchies. I quote Srinivas in this connection.

Burton Stein has argued that the modern phenomenon of competition among castes for enhanced status within a narrow, localized ranking system is inappropriate for understanding medieval mobility. Social mobility in medieval India involved spatial mobility, and the units of mobility were individual families; the need as well as the facilities for "corporate mobility" did not exist. ...Burton Stein has certainly enhanced our knowledge of Indian society, but in his analysis of mobility processes in medieval South India he has ignored the need which has always existed in the caste system to translate familial mobility to caste mobility. Otherwise mobility does not obtain public recognition. Whom will the sons and daughters of the mobile family marry? Marriage within the old caste group, the most natural solution, would be the negation of such mobility. (Ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 191, 196).

Bailey writes:

It is a peculiarity of the caste-system in the social structure of a village, as distinct from its formulation in Manu or its manipulation by kingly families, that mobility in the system of ritual ranking attaches not to individuals but to groups. Unless this peculiarity of caste is given full weight, it is impossible to see why the conflicts resulting from the new economy have continued to be fought out in the idioms of caste and between caste groups, and why the situation has not produced class-groupings along the lines of economic differentiation and across the borders of different castes. (1964: 270).

Two questions still remain to be answered. Are the positions which the castes occupy in the economic hierarchy achieved or ascribed and what is the role of religion in the economic hierarchy?

Briefly stated one might hold that the positions are neither entirely achieved nor entirely ascribed. They appear to be achieved in so far

as they depend upon the organized efforts of the caste groups. They are ascribed in so far as without such efforts on the part of the caste groups the positions are ranked in the purity - pollution continuum.

The role of religion in the economic hierarchy is evident in the limitations which it places on the social mobility of the individual.

CASTE AND THE  
ECONOMIC FRONTIER

BY

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## BISIPARA

Bisipara is situated in the center of the Kondmals, a Subdivision of Phulbank District in Western Orissa. This region has been relatively isolated because of its terrain and its unhealthy climate. It was opened to trade and administration by the East India Company in 1803.

Bisipara is a multi-caste village and is predominantly inhabited by Oriyas. Its population in 1953 was 685. The caste composition is given below:

TABLE 14

<u>Caste</u>	<u>Percentage of Population</u>
Boad Outcaste	21.7
Warrior	19.3
Kond Potter	16.5
Boad Distiller	6.7
Ganjam Outcaste	6.0
Weaver	4.6
Kond	3.8
Herdsman	3.4
Kond Herdsman	2.7
Sweeper	2.6
Ganjam Distiller	2.0
Fisherman	1.4
Boad Brahman	1.0
Barber	1.0
Washerman	1.0
Ganjam Brahman	1.0
Basker-maker	1.0
Templeman	1.0
Oriya*	0.8
Writer	0.2

\* Oriya is also a caste name

Bisipara is a nucleated type of settlement. It consists of a number of streets. These streets are named after the majority of the caste living in each. The Track street is an exception because it has an aggregate of houses inhabited by many castes. This part of the village is a recent addition.

## POLITICAL HIERARCHY

Kondmals is the home of <sup>o</sup>Konds, a Kui speaking animistic people who practiced human sacrifice a little over a century ago. It is an inhospitable forested land of hills and hollows with tracts of fertile land here and there. Oriyas, from across the Mahanadi river established themselves in the area by force and intrigue long before the British rule in India. They occupied wider valleys and best lands and lived in fortified villages in the centre of their realms which had fluctuating boundaries and shifting loyalties. They were Hindus, spoke Oriya language, were superior in the arts of war and government and remained distinct from the Konds.

Bisipara was colonized by the Oriyas in those days. They were made up of castes of unequal ritual purity. The high castes comprised the Brahmans, Warriors and Herdsman. The low castes consisted of Barber, Distiller and Washerman. Below them came the Outcastes.

As was the case with other Oriya dominated villages, political power and leadership rested with the Warriors. Excepting for the single family of Brahmans, the Warriors were also superior; they were the wealthy class and the dominant group in the village. The political relations of any other person to a Warrior depended on his position in a caste hierarchy. Caste, in other words, had a political function also. Caste was congruent with the political system.

In 1855 the Kondmals was brought under the British Administration. It was divided into 50 muthas and over each was placed a headman (sirdar or muthadar). However, the political primacy of the Oriyas was not greatly altered, though now they were representative of an effective outside force. Their political primacy remained practically unaffected partly because the newly appointed headmen were none other than the old Oriya Hill Chiefs, and partly because most of the servants of the East India Company were Oriyas.

Similarly the political primacy of the Oriya Warrior caste remained unchallenged on the village level for another half a century or so. The headman was invariably a Warrior, who was given this position by virtue of his being the head of his caste-group. He enjoyed considerable amount of authority and influence. He exercised jural and fiscal functions and acted as an arbiter in land and marital disputes. Bailey writes:

Over the years the mutha headmen built up a formidable list of perquisites attaching to their position. This varied from mutha to mutha but it would almost always include such items as the following; a contribution of paddy from the harvest; a gift on the occasion of a wedding or a funeral feast (often a gift as substantial as an ox or a cow); contributions to funerals and weddings in the headman's family; free entertainment when the headman was touring the Kond villages; and so forth (P. 183).

Significant changes have taken place in the political hierarchy in Bisipara during the last fifty years. The Warriors have lost much ground to the hitherto subservant castes, such as the Boad Distillers, Ganjam Distillers and the Boad Outcaste. For example, the Boad Distillers are now accepted



as members of equal rank by the Warriors and no questions are raised regarding their earlier polluting occupation. They take sides with the Warrior factions and have a much greater say in the management of the village than before. That they are able to combine more effectively for political action was evident from their dispute ostensibly with a Kond farm-servant but in a sense with the authorities during the years 1954. The circumstances were that a garden plot in the Boad Distiller street became the property of a Kond farm-servant not through sale but through manipulation. Thereupon he insisted building a house of his own in that plot. This provoked the united opposition of the Boad Distiller caste, to quote:

They have chosen to regard it as an infringement of their caste rights, if a man of lower caste were to live not at the end of their street, but in their midst, and to live not in a house built for him as a servant with the permission of his Boad Distiller master, but in a house built by himself in his own right as a landholder (P. 196).

The Ganjam Distillers were not one of the original castes which settled in Bisipara. Judging from the facts that they came to the village at a time when the Warriors were supreme in the village and that the Ganjam Distillers had a polluting occupation in those years, it appears that they have risen considerably in the political hierarchy. Their present political rank is indicated by their relations with the village council. The village council requires that heads of all clean castes attend its meetings regularly and that fines be imposed upon defaulters. There are five households of Ganjam Distillers in Bisipara and contrary to the rules of the village council only one of them attends the council meetings.

The council cannot or does not choose to fine the absentees. Further, though the Ganjam Distillers invariably cooperate with the village council in its decisions such as raising of funds and village ceremonies, they do not seem to give much weight to the village council as a political body. Bailey writes:

But they have not tried to participate in the political management of the village: They do not seek a following or try to obtain leadership within the village. Nor have they made a direct assault upon the political system of the village. But they do ignore its judicial aspect and it is on its juridical powers that the strength of the council is ultimately founded (P. 209).

The story of the Boad Outcaste is different as well as inconclusive. As Untouchables they do not sit in the village council. Until recently they were politically and economically subservant, physically segregated and labored under numerous ritual disqualifications. Overt manifestations of their attempts to rise in the political hierarchy appeared when they demanded entry into the village temple in 1948. The rest of the village rejected their demand and the matter was reported to the police. The Boad Outcaste failed to achieve their objectives and decided to build a temple of their own. The village retaliated by banning their traditional rights to beg and to make music at ceremonials. These ill feelings grew to a climax in an incident in the vicinity of the village. One evening an elderly Boad Outcaste and a youngman of the Warrior caste came face to face on a narrow strip between the irrigated paddy fields. What actually transpired is hotly disputed, but the episode ended with the youngman falling headlong into the deep mud.

The clean castes were furious and once again the Boad Outcastes sought the help of the police. Ultimately no action was taken against any party, but it became clear that the hitherto subservant Boad Outcastes were no longer so.

The significance of the changes in the inter caste political relations described here is twofold. First, two castes head the political hierarchy these days, viz., the Warrior and Boad Distillers. Second, as the cases of Ganjam Distillers and Boad Outcastes show that political relations of some castes may extend beyond the village indicating thereby that they are moving out of the village political arena.

## B

The highest position of the Warriors in the political hierarchy in the Kondmals as well as in Bisipara before the coming of Administration was primarily due to their number, organization and their traditional calling. Bailey writes:

The Warriors control over the land was sanctioned finally by their monopoly of physical force, a product partly of their numbers and partly of their traditional calling (P. 266).

Further:

The warriors possessed the ultimate sanction of physical force, untrammelled by the presence of Government (P. 267).

After the coming of the Administration the Warriors continued to be high in the political hierarchy mainly through influence rather than power. A major source of their influence was the position of headman, who was always of the Warrior caste. Being the only effective link between the village and the Government he could be a useful friend or a formidable enemy. It was upon his recommendations that appointments to the positions of paik (miliatiemen) and watchman for the village by the Government were made. These positions carry grants of land.

The explanation of the present political hierarchy is more complex. The location of Bisipara itself is one factor. It lies along the line of communication and in the center of Kondmals. It was probably on these accounts that it was a seat of Administration for many years. This brought it into direct contact with the outside world and made it a trader's frontier. Not only did merchants from neighbouring areas settle in the village but also the local population took to trading.

The Boad Distillers invested their spectacular profits from the drink trade in the purchase of land, again perhaps because of the location of the village. There was nothing else in which to make an investment, and also because land was a symbol of prestige. This explains why today there are two castes at the head of the political hierarchy. Bailey writes:

In other words the significance of the trader's frontier as an instrument of social change in Bisipara lay not in the volume of goods which is brought to the community, but in the fact that its wealth did not always accrue to those who controlled the agricultural economy, and who had the power in the traditional political structure of the village (P. 239).

The case of the Boad Distillers indicates that wealth is a second factor in the political hierarchy in Bisipara. However, the role of wealth appears to be qualified in two ways viz., the extent to which a caste is an integral part of the village economy and secondly, whether or not its occupation is polluting or it is on the wrong side of the pollution. For example, the Ganjam Distillers do not play any significant role as leaders in the village in spite of their wealth. This is mainly because, unlike the Boad Distillers they are a part of the wider economy rather than Bisipara only.

The importance of a caste's role in the village economic life as a factor in the political hierarchy is also evident from a comparison between the successful boycott of the Boad Outcaste in Bisipara with the unsuccessful boycott of the Pan, their counterparts in neighbouring Baderi. In Bisipara the village council transferred the traditional rights of the Boad Outcaste

to beg and make music at ceremonies to Ganjam Outcastes and Sweepers, and the Boad Outcaste had to accept the council's decision. On the contrary similar measures on the part of the village council were ineffective against the Pans, in spite of the fact that one of the councilors was slapped by a Pan Untouchable right in the midst of a formal meeting (1966: 128-37).

That wealth alone does not entitle a caste to have a high position in the political hierarchy unless it abandons its polluting occupation is exemplified by the Boad Distiller caste. They stopped making liquor, Sanskritized their way of life and took to agriculture as their principal occupation. In this process they had to disassociate themselves from these members of their subcaste who were not living in Bisipara and who did not Sanskritize their ways. This was because 'it is a peculiarity of the caste-system in the social structure of a village, as distinct from its formulation in Manu or its manipulation by kingly families, that mobility in the system of ritual ranking attaches not to individuals but to groups' (P. 270). Bailey describes the process of their social mobility in the following words:

Approximation to the behaviour of an ideal Brahman is, however, only the first step in improving one's ritual status. For the new status must be asserted, made public, and reinforced by separating oneself from others with whom one formerly was associated, usually on the grounds that they are not observing the new restrictions. This is the familiar process of the emergence of sub-castes and the split becomes evident in the refusal of the aspiring group to dine or to marry with the rest. Such divisions do in fact exist in the Boad Distiller caste. Those in Bisipara call themselves the "great Distillers" (Boro Sundi) and neither inter-marry nor inter-dine with the other two sub-castes (P. 189).

Again, wealth may not be able to overcome the line of pollution. This assertion finds support from a comparison between the Boad Outcaste and the Kond Potters. The former are in the untouchable category and the later are not. Their economic positions do not differ greatly, and in actuality the Boad Outcaste are comparatively more educated and have a greater number of Government employees, such as schoolmasters, etc. Yet the Boad Outcaste have not been able to find a higher position in the political hierarchy of the village, while the Kond Potters do not appear to have any problems.

Localization is another factor in the political hierarchy. Bailey writes:

One of these features is localization. This precluded individual mobility. The rich man remain tied to his fellows by kinship and excluded from higher groups by their knowledge of his origin. If a man is determined to improve his position apart from the rest of his fellows, then his only course is to separate himself from the local community, either literally by going away, or structurally by abandoning Hinduism (P. 271).

In Bisipara the Boad Outcaste have been "thrust into the wider policy" and have not been able to rise in the political hierarchy in the village on account of localization.

Two questions still remain to be answered in this section. These are: a.) how far are the positions in the political hierarchy in Bisipara ascribed and how far are they achieved?; b.) what is the role of religion in the political hierarchy?

The answers are given below:

It is clear that upward political mobility has taken place in Bisipara during the last hundred years and that the role of effort on the part of the castes concerned has been a very important factor. Yet the political hierarchy today is also ascribed in so far as:

The forces of change are thus canalized, and given certain conditions, the structure of caste groups is unimpaired, although the ranking of units within this structure may be modified in accordance with their changed economic rank ... Ritual rank continued to be validated by differential control over productive resources (P. 271).

Further:

A similar illustration of the fact that differential ability to profit from the new economy was not solely dependent on the capacity of individuals is provided by the Warrior caste-group. Their leaders have profited from the Administration's preference for the traditional rulers. Likewise the Scheduled Castes and the Adibasis enjoy the protection of discriminating legislation in the competition for salaried posts (P. 237).

As regards the role of religion in the political hierarchy, the evidence from Bisipara indicates that it is significant. In the first place, as has been shown above, mobility has taken place within the idiom of Hindu varna. In the second place:

Augmented political effectiveness leads to efforts to improve ritual status and in certain circumstances this goal can be achieved. This is simply a variation of the common-sense sociological principle that the newly-rich adjust their patterns of behavior to existing wealthy classes. The situation here is complicated by the fact that the ideal behavior is that enjoined by Hinduism, and not simply the pattern followed by a wealthy class (P. 191).

It is necessary to take note of comments by Silverberg on this question here.

He writes:



Several discussants have mentioned that conflicting values complicate the caste system at present, yet I think that to understand what is going on today, we must note that there is coming to be a much greater uniformity in the values relevant to stratification. Uniformity is a concomitant of spreading modern networks of mass communication, and an effect of having stronger governments of in control of communications. A voter or a schoolboy or an ambitious group of low-caste industrial workers is no longer offered a wide variety of vārṇa models for conduct. Instead, a common package of civic virtues is held up for emulation by all. In this now, uniform selection of values - evident in textbooks speeches, and advertising - there is the asceticism and high thinking (but not the exclusiveness and ritualism) of the Brahman, the ambition and steadfastness (but not the violent, domineering qualities) of the Kshatriya, the thrift and purity (but not the selfishness or religious obsessiveness) of the Vaishya, the spirit of service (but not the ignorance and passivity) of the Sudra villager. The new value system, deeply influenced by western civilization may retain some of what Edward Harper and Cora Dubios identify as its "basic values" but the system is narrower. Priests must become teachers, landlords must become vegetarians, shopkeepers must become community leaders, peasants must become scholars. Competition is intensified for achievement in relation to fewer, more homogeneous norms, and achievement is opened to all individuals, not only to members of appropriately specialized castes (1968: 119).

The following assertions in the above passage are of particular relevance to the present discussion. a.) A uniform set of values is emerging for all Hindus irrespective of their caste. b.) Achievement is also open to all irrespective of caste. The first assertion is another way of saying that all castes are what Srinivas has called Sanskritizing their ways. This assertion does not contradict the point being emphasized here because Sanskritization involves "adopting higher standards of ritual purity in terms of the religious practices and taboos defined by Hindu religion (ed. Silverberg, 1968: 33).

The assertion concerning individual achievement does not take many relevant facts into account. Individuals may achieve higher political or economic positions but their links with the members of their subcaste are of such a nature that it is not possible for these individuals to sever them without unacceptable ritual consequences for a Hindu. He must carry at least some members of his subcaste along with him. It is on this account that in spite of factions, the Warriors in Bisipara collectively perform common funerary rites though on a modified scale. Bailey describes the role of ritual links between an individual and his subcaste as follows:

In seeking to improve his position in the ritual system of rank in his own community, the rich man cannot throw off his poorer caste-fellows; he must carry them along with him. There are clear reasons for this. The new economy has done nothing to break down caste endogamy. Therefore a man must find a wife from among his own group. He depends on the rest of his caste for help in the rites of marriage and death and at numerous other crisis in the course of his life. With such ties as this, the most that the wealthy within a caste group can do to lighten their upward passage by jettisoning poorer caste-fellows is to form a sub-caste. This sub-caste must consist of at least two unrelated families in the first instance, otherwise marriage will be impossible. Since the members of a caste-group often derive from one ancestor, social conditions are not always favorable for sub-caste development, even when economic conditions are appropriate. Fission might be made difficult by existing ties of kinship, which would conflict with the new sub-caste ties: the claim to a new status might even mean physical movement out of the caste street. It is probably such factors as these that have prevented sub-castes emerging among the Boad Outcastes, and have caused the rich and poor among them to be associated in efforts to improve status. The same ties, and the same knowledge that mobility adheres to groups and not individuals, instills a sense of solidarity in the caste-group and causes the poorer to support their own "middle classes" in the struggle against higher castes (P. 270).

## ECONOMIC HIERARCHY

The economic hierarchy in Bisipara has undergone considerable changes during the last hundred years. Before the coming of the Administration in 1855, the population in the village comprised of the Warriors, Boad Brahman, Barber, Washerman, Herdsman, Boad Distiller and Boad Outcaste. The Warriors were owner and cultivators of all the land in the village. The Boad Outcaste worked as farm labourers. The Brahman, Barber, Washerman, Herdsman and Distiller each had specialist tasks in the economic and ritual organization of the village. Bisipara was then a relatively self sufficient agricultural community with the warriors at the head of the economic hierarchy and other castes as their dependents.

The hierarchy is different these days. Table 15 shows the distribution of village land between castes in 1953. The Warriors are no longer the sole landowners. They own only 28 percent of land as against 33 percent owned by their earlier dependents and 39 percent owned by new comers.

Table 15

<u>Caste</u>	<u>Share of total income from landown taken in pledge or share cropped</u>	<u>Average annual in- come per head in units of paddy</u>	<u>Percentage of village population</u>
Warrior	28.2	21.7	19.3
Boad Distiller	10.0	21.5	6.7
Ganjam Distillers	12.5	96.0	2.0
Boad Braham	1.7	28.0	1.0
Ganjam Brahman	0.8	13.0	1.0
Herdsmen	1.25	6.0	3.4
Barber	nil	nil	1.0
Washerman	0.13	1.6	1.0
Weaver	1.0	3.4	4.6
Templeman	1.0	13.0	1.0
Fisherman	0.75	7.5	1.4
Oriya	1.0	18.7	0.8
Sweeper	0.6	3.3	2.6
Basketmaker	0.5	7.6	1.0
Boad Outcaste	20.5	13.0	21.7
Ganjam Outcaste	3.0	6.8	6.0
Kond	0.75	3.0	3.8
Kond Herdsman	0.25	1.7	2.7
Kond-potter	12.2	11.0	16.5
Writer	nil	nil	0.2

Bisipara is also known as traders; village. It has a number of salaried Government officials. It is necessary to take note of various types of economic activities here.

The most notable traders in the village are the Ganjam Distillers. They run shops and are regarded as one of the wealthiest caste in the village. Further individuals from almost every caste engage themselves in small trading. Some trade in paddy, processed rice or turmeric. Some work as itinerant small traders and as marketman. Two Ganjam Outcaste ply carts and a number of Boad Outcaste are engaged in cattle trade. A Kond Potter and a Boad Distiller own oil presses. Weavers and many Boad Outcaste weave cloth and cotton shawls for sale.

Village officials also belong to different castes. Both the headman, two schoolmasters and the postman are Warriors. Two messengers are Kond Potters. Five schoolmasters, one policeman, two messengers, three watchmen are Boad Outcaste.

There are 23 households of village servants. These comprise 5 Brahman, 2 Barber, 1 Washerman, 9 Herdsmen, 2 Templemen, 4 Sweeper households. Of these, only 12, namely, 3 Brahman, 2 Barber, 1 Washermen, 3 Herdsmen, 1 Templeman and 2 Sweeper households are employed by the village, payment being made to them by the tithe system (jajmani).

In addition to these there are 7 miliatiamen (paik). Five of them are Kond Potters, 1 is a Herdsman, and 1 a Boad Outcaste. Their position

carries with it a small grant of land.

The economic hierarchy in Bisipara appears to be as follows:

Warriors

Ganjam Distillers

Boad Distillers

Boad Outcaste

Kond Potters

The remaining castes are equal in the hierarchy mainly because all of them more or less are on subsistence level. However, it can be argued that those who work as village servants on tithe payments are lower than those who either work on cash basis or make a living through trading.

The evidence of what appears to be a helpless position of these village servants is found in the cases of the Brahman, Barber and the Washerman. Brahman A was boycotted some years ago and so far he has not been able to find an alternative position nor has he been reinstated in spite of his repeated appeals. The Barber threatened to strike yet continued to work. The Washerman has been fined by the villagers a number of times for some real or imaginary pretexts. He paid the fines and continued to work.

B

The coming of the Administration was an event of major importance in the history of Bisipara. It brought the village into a wider economic system and enforced laws which had far reaching consequences. One such legislative measure was the recognition of an individual's right to own or sell landed property irrespective of his caste and his traditional occupation. By itself this legislation does not appear to be of much significance, but it was probably one of the most important factors which combined with other circumstances brought great changes in the economic hierarchy of the village. For example, in former times the sons of a deceased Warrior had no other choice but to continue living in joint family without participating in their father's estate. The new legislation made it possible for dissatisfied heirs to participate in their father's estate.

Bailey writes:

Why, then, has partition become normal and the joint family the exception? While the family are agriculturists pure and simple, family economics can be efficiently managed by one man. Whatever the rivalries and tensions between brothers their economic interest is divided to the same end - making the estate produce as much as possible. But when one brother gets an income from trade and another is a policeman and a third is a carter and the fourth and fifth remain on the land; and when the trader and the policeman and the carter refuse to put their earnings into the common pool, as they are permitted to do in certain conditions; and when they demand a share of the estate so that they may sell it and use the money to finance other undertakings - then all the brothers are glad to partition and go their own way. The joint family cannot survive divergent interest and disparate incomes among its members (P. 92).

A result of the partitioning of the estates was that land came into the market. In earlier times expenses incurred on the occasions of marriages and death were borne by the joint family. Now such expenses become the responsibility of the individual. It was important for him to invite all the agnates on these occasions and in many cases he had to sell his estate to meet these expenses. Fifty-seven cases of sale of estates were reported in Bisipara, thirty of these were sold in order to meet such expenses (P. 58). In words of Bailey, "The most important single cause bringing estates down to this danger-level is the system of inheritance - partition of the estate between all sons at the death of the holder<sup>1</sup> (P.48).

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The economic consequences of smallholdings in the prepartitioned Panjab in British India have been examined by Darling. He shows that small holdings led to widespread indebtedness and that one of the principal causes was the customary heavy expenditures at ceremonials. His survey also reveals what could be the influence of religious beliefs on economic behavior. For example, he mentions that in the south-west and northern districts, which are predominantly Muslim populated, the cost of a marriage ceremony would range from Rs. 250 to Rs. 450, while further south in Hissar, on the edge of Bikaner, the Bagri Hindu Jat rarely spends less than Rs. 2,000. This conclusion is also supported by his comparison between the extent of indebtedness in the Muslim populated Rawalpindi District with that in predominantly Hindu populated Hoshiarpur district. Both Districts have similar climate, and same rainfall. Land holdings in both the Districts are small and "there are the same necessity and enterprise urging men into the army and out into the world beyond. But the two differ in regards to the extent of indebtedness. The average debt in Rawalpindi is only Rs. 171 and total debt is no more than nine times the land revenue and that 24 percent have no debt at all. Compare this with Hoshiarpur District where only 11 percent are free from debt" (1947: 54-76).



Land cannot be sold if there are no buyers. Here again the circumstances were initiated by the Administration. The hitherto unsettled region was brought under the control of the Government of India and the resultant peaceful conditions opened up the country to new settlers. In the meantime prohibition was enforced in the south and the sellers of drink migrated in large numbers across the boarder from Ganjam into the Kondmals. It was during that period that the Ganjam Distillers and Boad Distillers settled in Bisipara. Shortly after this the Government also made it illegal for the Konds to distill their own liquor. Until then the Konds who comprise more than half of the population of Kondmals, had made their own liquor from the flowers of mohua tree which abounds in that area. The Government was successfully able to put a stop to the production of liquor in the home-stills but the craze for the drink remained unabated and the Konds were compelled to patronize licensed out-stills which were run by men of Distiller castes. The Bisipara Distillers made spectacular profits from the sale of liquor and invested the wind-fall profits in land. This explains why today Ganjam Distillers' income per head in units of paddy is 96 and that of Boad Distillers is 21.5 as contrasted to 21.7 of the Warriors.

Why did anyone other than the Distillers, not start manufacture or sale of liquor? Particularly why did the Warriors choose to sell their estates rather than take to a lucrative trade? In Bailey's opinion the reasons were that the Distiller castes alone had the monopoly arising out of caste-beliefs and Government support. He writes:

A second aspect of the principle that men as profit-makers are not equal is the result of the combined effects of the caste system and Administrative action. The examples are obvious. The Distiller caste-group alone are qualified to trade in drink. The drink-trade was made extraordinarily profitable by the Government's ban on home-stills. The Government was interested in Excise Revenue, and it is possible that local officials were subjected to a "Distiller lobby" but the profits which accrued to the Distillers over a period of forty years were not primarily the result of their business acumen or entrepreneurial exertions (P. 237).

Further:

Sellers of drink are necessarily low in the caste ritual hierarchy, since alcoholic drink is polluting. The higher castes are not allowed to touch it. I assume, therefore, that before 1855 and during the period from 1970 to 1910, when the drink-trade was flourishing the Boad Distiller caste occupied a lowly position in the caste hierarchy - among the low (nichô) Hindus, but above the line of being themselves polluting (P. 188).

The rise on the part of Boad Outcaste in the economic hierarchy had different causes. An English Middle school and an Upper Primary school were started in Bisipara. It seems that the Boad Outcaste took advantage of the opportunities and many of them qualified themselves for jobs in the Government. In the meantime a legislation favouring the Harijans which included the outcastes came into force. According to this legislation a proportion of all minor Governmental posts such as school masters, policeman, messenger in the Revenue, Forest and Agricultural department was reserved for them. In 1955 there were eleven minor village salaried officials from Boad Outcaste in a total of eighteen such officials in Bisipara. They are investing their income in the purchase of land and new land is going to Boad Outcastes. With 21.7 percent of

the consuming population, they get 20.5 percent of the income. This income in units of paddy per head from land is 13 (P. 220).

Next to the Boad Outcaste in the economic hierarchy are the Kond Potters. They are ritually clean caste but are low in the economic hierarchy. Only two of them are employed as salaried officials. Twenty-three households have small farms; 9 have no land and live on small trade. Bailey attributes their position in economic hierarchy due to a lack of hard work and initiative in them. He compares the Kond Potters with the Boad Outcaste and points out that the former were slow to take advantage of the opportunities made available by the Administration than were the latter.

New economic opportunities and increase in population explain very largely why the economic position of these castes who work on tithe payments is unstable and risky. The Boad Outcaste were boycotted with great flourish by the clean castes. Their traditional privileges as music makers and licensed beggars were withdrawn and given to the Genjam Outcastes and Sweepers. This measure failed to damp their "revolutionary" spirit and enhanced ill feelings between them and other castes.

Were it not for the fact that the Boad Outcastes had become a part of wider economic and political arena, their traditional subservience would have continued. The effect of increasing population is exemplified in the case of the Barber. If there is no Barber in the village a whole row of barbers is waiting to serve in a nearby town.

The effects of a wider economic field upon the economic hierarchy in Bisipara are striking. Striking also is the disassociation between the traditional and the present occupation of a caste. Bailey writes:

Not every person works at his traditional occupation. The Distillers do not touch liquor. The Kond Potters do not know how to make pots. The Fishermen do not fish. The Warriors are cultivators. Even where there is scope for practising an hereditary occupation, not all members of the appropriate caste engage in the work (P. 96).

He believes that major factors in the adoption of a craft are aptitude, skill and capital. He says:

On the other hand, a man can pick up carpentry, doctoring or divining, because to some extent every man is his own carpenter, doctor and diviner. If he turns out to have an aptitude for one of these crafts, then his talent can grow and he can begin to work for others. Caste has no direct or indirect influence on entry into these trades (P. 110).

This raises the question; does this mean that in a wider economic field rational economic motivation is the only major factor in the choice of occupations and therefore Hinduism is not significant in the economic structure of Bisipara today? The answer is in the negative. The significance of the Hindu religion is the economic hierarchy is evident in the following ways:

a.) An ucho, Hindu name a ("high caste Hindu"), would not take to a calling which involved pollution, however lucrative the calling might happen to be. The case of the Warriors exemplifies this.

b.) If a nicho, Hindumae low caste Hindu becomes wealthy it approximates the Brahman. It means that the frame of reference is the varna scheme.

c.) Rising in the ritual hierarchy is a group process. It is on these accounts that the Ganjam Distillers and Boad Distillers are approximating the Brahmanic ways. Recently the Boad Outcaste, who are becoming wealthier, are also doing the same. Bailey explains:

The Boad Distillers in the last forty years, have made active, conscious, and on the whole successful efforts to raise their ritual status and their political status within the village. Indeed, the caste as a whole in the Kondmals has tried to better itself according to the Hindu rules.

According to the Hindu rules (which is a translation of a phrase frequently on the lips of informants), there is only one way of improving oneself, and that is to approximate one's behavior to a stereotype of the behavior of a Brahmin, in particular with regard to what is eaten. This the Boad Distillers have done. They no longer deal in drink, being forbidden by the law to do so, nor unlike some of the other castes, do they keep illicit stills for their own use. What is more, their caste-council has laid down rules forbidding members to touch alcoholic drink. These rules, promulgated and reiterated every three or four years at the meetings of the caste-councils, have also put a ban on eating flesh in any form - that is, on eggs, meat, and fish (PP. 188-9).

Barber characterizes the disassociation between castes and their traditional occupations reported from other parts of India as "a new picture of social mobility in the traditional Hindu caste system". He emphasizes the roles of wealth, education, government service and political affiliations, etc., in the emerging new picture. He writes:

The newer view of the Hindu caste system and of its processes of social mobility involves the explicit statement of a whole series of interrelated points which are at variance with the older description. Perhaps the key point in the series is this one, that the individual and his associated kin group in Indian society are ranked not along one but along several different social and cultural dimensions (ed. Silverberg, 1968: 18-9).

For the purposes of the present discussion the key point is the individual is an integral part of his associated kin group in what Barber calls "the new picture of social mobility". It will be agreed that links between the individual and his associated kin group are none other than ritual obligations.

CASTE CLASS AND POWER

BY

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## SRIPURAM

Sripuram is situated on the north bank of the Kaveri river about eight miles from Tanjore, South India. It is a nucleated settlement, containing 349 households. The total population is 1,400. It is divided into three more or less well-defined physical segments, the Agraharam, the Kudiana Streets, and the Cheri. The Agraharam is exclusively inhabited by the Brahmans. The Kudiana Streets are non-Brahman quarters. A fairly large number of castes live here and therefore the population is heterogeneous. The Cheri is Adi-Dravida segment. It is separate and distinct from the other segments evidently because the inhabitants are untouchables.

The caste composition of Sripuram is as follows:

TABLE 16

<u>Caste</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons</u>
<u>Brahman</u>		
Kannada-speaking Madhva	1	4
Telegu-speaking Smartha Konaseemsdravida	7	19
Velnadu	4	18
Mulahandu	3	10
Tamil-speaking Smartha Brihacharnam Mazhanattu Brihacharanam	9	42
		92



Kandramanichya Brihacharanam	5	20
Vadama: Chozhadesha	3	20
Astaschashram	1	2
Tamil-speaking Shri Vaishnava Vadagalai	55	197
Temple Priests		
Bhattachar (Thengalai)	1	2
Kurukkāl	1	5
<u>Non-Brahman</u> (cultivating Castes)		
<u>The Kalla Group:</u>		
Kalla	24	110
Ambalakkara	3	15
Muttiria	6	20
Ahamudiya	6	33
<u>The Vellala Group:</u>		
Vellalas Proper		
Chozhia Vellala	49	198
Karaikkattu Vellala	1	8
Kodikkal Vellala	4	17
Gaunda or Konga Vellala	4	10
Nayanar	1	6
Mudaliyar	3	12
<u>Other Cultivating Castes</u>		
Padaychi	27	81
Muppanar	5	15
Odaiyar	3	11
Naicker	2	9
<u>Artisan Castes</u>		
Tattan (Goldsmith)	5	23
Tachchan (Carpenter)	1	4
Kusavan (Potter)		
<u>Servicing Castes</u>		
Pandaram (Temple Priest)	4	17
Melakkaran (Temple Servant)	3	19
Ambattan (Barber)	3	15
Vannan (Washerman)	1	5
<u>Other</u>		
Konan (Herdsman)	5	23
Nadar (Toddy Tapper)	1	7

Non-Tamil Castes

Maratha	1	9
Reddiyar	1	2
Nayudu	1	11

Adi-Dravidas

Palla	82	332
Thotti	1	8
Chakkiliya	1	3

<u>344</u>	<u>1.372</u>
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Non-Hindu population has not been included.

## POLITICAL HIERARCHY

It is difficult to understand changes in the political hierarchy in Sripuram without a reference to political developments in Tamilnad, a region in which Sripuram is situated. The Brahmins were considered to be the only legitimate political leaders till the early twentieth century. They had monopolized western education, as a result of which many of them entered the Indian Civil Service and other professions. Added to their high ritual status and their power emanating from ownership of land throughout the region the new positions of authority enhanced their political status still higher.

The first signs of change in the 19th century in the political hierarchy appeared in the form of a newspaper, the Justice, a vehicle of non-Brahmins' demands in 1917. At about the same time the Non-Brahmins founded the Justice Party thereby heralding a struggle between Brahmins and others. The leaders of the Justice party managed to have discriminatory measures favouring the Non-Brahmins built into the administration. Posts in the government as well as seats in the institutions of higher learning came to be reserved for Non-Brahmins. A Self-Respect movement was started by the Non-Brahmins in the thirties. It denounced the Brahmins for "their bigotry and duplicity" and urged that marriages be performed without the services of Brahmin priests. "A general attitude of hostility toward Brahmin came to be built on the social plane, and feelings ran high against them" (P. 211).

The wave of anti-Brahman feeling which swept through the region found its echo in Sripuram. Before Independence the Brahmans had enjoyed a great measure of power in the village. The panchayat president was always a Brahman. The panchayat room was located in the Agraharam, and initiative in all important matters was in the hands of Brahmans. The Non-Brahmans were only second class citizens. The Adi-Dravidas were practically of no political consequences and were totally subservient to the rest of the village. No Adi-Dravida could enter the Agraharam except on business and that also only in the backyard. In case a Brahman decided to show his displeasure with an Adi-Dravida he would send for him through his Non-Brahman tenant, get the culprit tied to a tree and beaten. This was practiced even for minor offences.

The Post-Independent period has witnessed a rapid decline in the political primacy of the Brahmans. On January 26, 1950, the day when India became a republic, a man from the Kalla caste gathered together a large group of Non-Brahmans and Adi-Dravidas and marched through the Agraharam up to the gates of the Vishnu temple. This was something unheard of in Sripuram. For Adi-Dravidas to march through the Agraharam was not only ritually polluting but also brought social humiliation on the Brahmans. However, the Brahmans did not protest apparently having realized that the balance of power was no longer in their favour.

These days Kallas, a Non-Brahman caste, heads the political hierarchy both in the region as well as in Sripuram. This was made evident when the three political parties, the Congress, the D.M.K., and the P.S.P.

nominated candidates from the Kalla caste for the Thiruvaiyar assembly. Even the retiring member as well as his predecessor were Kallas. It is generally acknowledged that any candidate to be successful from this constituency (in which Sripuram is situated) had to be a Kalla. The influence of the Kallas was also evident in their dispute with the Adi-Dravidas in a neighbouring village. The dispute arose when the Kallas attempted to take away forcibly the alleged Adi-Dravida murderer from the courtroom in order to deliver justice to him on their own terms. The Minister of the State had to intervene before the matter was settled.

The influence and power of the Kallas within Sripuram is manifested in many ways. The president of the Panchayat is a Kalla. There are 14 members of the village panchayat, elected from the three segments of Sripuram, but in practice the village is run by the president, his brother-in-law, and some of his close associates, who are not members of the Panchayat. The president has a reputation of being a strongman and it is hard for anyone to cross his path. During the General Elections there was an altercation between him and another Non-Brahman youth from the village who was canvassing for a rival candidate. The president took off his slipper and beat the young man with it in public, in the presence of the polling officer. No action was taken against him.

The response of the Brahmans to the rise of a Non-Brahman caste in the political hierarchy has been an attitude of aloofness and detachment. Soon after the constitution of a new panchayat, some influential

Non-Brahman leaders went to one of the prominent Brahmans in the Agraharam and appealed to him to take over the affairs of the Panchayat. In spite of their repeated assurance of complete cooperation on their part, he declined the offer and continued to keep himself aloof from the panchayat.

It seems that even the Brahmans have come to recognize the growing influence of the president. A few years ago a prominent Brahman landowner in a neighbouring village was having trouble with one of his tenants. The tenant refused to vacate a plot of land which the landlord wanted to cultivate under his own management. The help of the president was sought by the landlord, the tenant took flight and quit the plot.

The Adi-Dravida are still subservient to the higher castes. Though formally all members of the village panchayat have equal rights, the Adi-Dravida members are made to sit separately if, indeed they are invited to attend its meetings.

However, they enjoy a considerable measure of independence within the boundaries of their Cheri. They have a panchayat, sevai sangam consisting of 11 members. This panchayat adjudicates disputes in Cheri and imposes fines for various kinds of breaches of customs. It raises funds by subscription. Beteille remarks:

A closer study of the village shows that there are within it at least three spheres of power. These spheres broadly correspond to the three main subdivisions of the village, namely, the Agraharam, the Non-Brahman streets and the Cheri. Each subdivision has, to a certain extent, its own community life, with its own leaders and men of influence.

Needless to say, these spheres tend to overlap in many areas and the leaders of one community may have influence over others. But by and large the three aspheres tend to maintain a measure of autonomy (P. 165).

However, the Non-Brahmans tend to be higher than the Brahmins in the wider political area:

Independence in 1947 and the first General Elections in independent India in 1951-52, saw the Non-Brahmins forge further ahead in their control of the Congress and of politics in Tamilnad as a whole...By the fifties the Non-Brahmins were in a commanding position in the Congress party the State Legislature and the Cabinet. They have more or less effectively maintained their control till now (P. 214).

## B

The principal factors in the political primacy of the Brahmans were their ownership of land, high ritual status, monopoly of scholarship and association with the rulers. They were the first to take advantage of the schools and colleges started by the British. Western education not only brought social prestige on its own right, but also opened the way to new economic opportunities. The new urban jobs - clerical, executive, and professional - became a virtual monopoly of the Brahmans. This brought them close to the new rulers of India.

Traditionalism, reverence for authority, low self-concept and lack of organization, were responsible for the subservient position of the Non-Brahmans. Beteille calls it a habit of thinking and relates an incident which supports his contention. A Brahman mirasdar\* wanted to buy a tree from an Adi-Dravida. As the tree was lying in the Cheri the Brahman expressed his desire to go and inspect it before striking a deal. The Adi-Gravidas begged him not to go there and brought the tree to the Agraharam. This habit of thinking is also reflected in the everyday behavior of the Adi-Dravidas. He steps aside when he sees a Brahman passing that way.

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\*Mirasdar literally means one who possesses inherited property. (Miras, Arabic meaning inherited property; dar, Persian, one who possesses). The Brahmans were referred to as Mirasdars because they have inherited land granted to their ancestors by the Chola and the Nayaka Kings over a thousand years ago (P. 13).



Causes of changes in the political hierarchy during the last forty years lie in the Agraharam, the wider political arena, and in the Non-Brahman Street as well as in the Cheri. Let me begin with the Agraharam.

The Agraharam: There is no leadership in the Agraharam and it is doubtful if the Brahmans are accustomed to a strong leadership. Beteille writes:

It is necessary to highlight the exclusive nature of Shri-Vaishnava religion because it has important structural implications. It had in the past built a wall between them and the Smarthas and, to some extent, all other Brahmans. Not long ago there used to be bitter conflict between Smarthas and Shri Vaishnavas, not only in the village, but in the region as a whole (P. 68).

Further:

Until fairly recently several Smarthas refused to participate in the activities of the Vishnu temple as a retaliation for like behaviour on the part of Shri Vaishnavas with regard to the Shiva temple. One prominent member of the Smartha community, who died recently, is said to have spent his leisure hours in lengthy tirades against the Shri Vaishnavas. Since he was learned in three languages - Tamil, Sanskrit, and English - he could more than hold his own against the Shri Vaishnava elders in asserting that Shankaracharya was superior to Ramanuja, and Shiva to Vishnu (P. 70).

Again:

Orthodox Shri Vaishnavas, particularly of the older generation, still do not sit along with Smarthas on such occasions (marriages etc.) nor do they accept cooked food of any kind, or even water, from the hands of Smartha Brahmans. Such people are known usually as vaidic (orthodox) in contrast to the ordinary people who are called laukic (lay or secular). The vaidic Shri Vaishnava performs all the ritual duties of the Brahman strictly according to tradition; their daily life is a

continuous round of rituals ...the distinction between vaidic and laukic does not however correspond to distinctions specific to the caste system, because in the same family one brother may be vaidic, while the other is laukic..Generally vaidic Iyenger do not eat in public or with laukic people, even though the latter may be of their own caste. They do not normally eat food cooked by anyone but their own close relatives, and if one has undergone the important baranyasam rite, he usually refuses food cooked by anyone but himself or his wife (P. 58-9).

It seems that in spite of ritual exclusiveness the Agraharam has been having a man of influence now and then. For example, fifteen years ago a Brahman mirasdar commanded respect for all the Brahmans. He was in the direct line of descent of one of the ancient families of the village. He and his ancestors had contributed both money and land to the Vishnu temple at Melur, and had taken action in many collective undertakings in the village. His example indicates that "in order to be fully accepted as a leader in an Agraharam one has to combine landownership with other qualities such as, learning and scholarship - both traditional and modern - and membership in an ancient and well established family or kin group" (P. 169).

Agraharam as a political force is being weakened through a gradual shifting of its population to the city. Four out of five big mirasdars do not live in Sripuram.

Territorial dispersal is particularly marked among the Brahmans. Among them networks of kinship and affinity not only cut across the boundary of the village, but also of the district and the state. Western education and the availability of professional and white-collar jobs in towns and cities throughout the country have been the principal factors behind the territorial mobility of the Brahmans (P. 222).

In Tamilnad the rise of the Non-Brahman in the political hierarchy was due to "a new sense of identify and a new ideology in the Self-Respect movement". The movement created for the first time a feeling among Non-Brahmans that they were equal to the Brahmins, if not superior" (P. 214).

It is the anti-Brahman movement rather than class conflict between the landowners and the landless that has dominated political life in this area over the last forty years (P. 212).

The rise of the Non-Brahmins in general and the Kallas in particular in the political hierarchy in Sripuram is due not only to the wide-spread anti-Brahman feelings in the region but also to factors such as numerical strength, organization and leadership. The Kallas are numerally the largest in the region, are very well organized and have an aggressive and effective leadership. Their leader, the president of the village panchayat comes from a family of toddy-tappers. This trade brought him into contact with the Adi-Dravidas who made his father's principal customers. He makes use of the associations from time as is clear from the support he received from them when he ejected an obstinate tenant of a mirasdar. The toddy trade also brought him in contact with the law enforcing authorities and he has learned how to handle them. He does not hesitate to use violence and to produce false evidence should the need arise. He has earned a name for leadership and members of Legislative assembly and bosses of political parties seek his help during elections. He is seen moving with them in

a jeep and these links enable him to distribute patronage and to maintain his influence. Beteille remarks:

Power is, in more ways than one, contagious. Those who move with the powerful are regarded by others as being themselves powerful (P. 158).

Judging from the example of Kalla, it might be generalized that unless there is organization and leadership, numbers alone do not necessarily enhance the position of a caste in the political hierarchy. The Vellalas are numerically larger in Sripuram than the Kallas and are in no way ritually inferior to them, yet the Kallas are politically higher evidently because the Vellalas are not organized and do not have an effective leadership (Table 16).

As regards the Adi-Dravidas their subservience has been explained as follows:

The Adi-Dravidas are unable to participate fully in the affairs of the panchayat for a different reason. While the Barhmans have largely chosen to withdraw from participation, the Adi-Dravidas by and large find themselves excluded because of their low economic, social and tirual position. When they do attend meetings of the panchayat they are required to sit separately. Often they are informed about a meeting only after it had been held, and their thumb impressions are later secured on the relevant documents (P. 153).

It was noted in previous section that Sripuram has three almost autonomous spheres, the Agraham, the non-Brahman street and Cheri. The explanation of these what might be called non-hierarchial political relations, lies partly in the unwillingness on the part of the Brahmans to make agriculture as their principal occupation and partly to legislative

measures such as the adult franchise and discriminatory laws granting special rights to the schedule castes. To quote Beteille:

Power blocs in Sripuram are not only informal in nature, but their composition also tends to be fluid. There has been a good deal of change in the distribution of power and such change is, in fact, an important feature of the system today. Changes in the distribution of power and the composition of power blocs are reflections of shifts in the bases of power. Some of the old bases of power, such as birth and ritual status, are being partly supplanted by new ones, such as numerical support, part membership, and contact with officials (P. 144).

The consequences of these developments are that unlike the power based on landed wealth, power based on other factors tends to be shifting and highly susceptible to outside influences.

Let me now turn to the question "how far are the positions in the political hierarchy ascribed and how far are they achieved"?

Evidence from Sripuram indicates that the positions of the Brahmans and the Adi-Dravidas are ascribed to a large extent. As mirasdars the Brahmans could have built up much greater influence among the Adi-Dravidas. They failed to do this because their ritual status did not permit them to have a more informal contact with the ritually unclean. Similarly, the Adi-Dravida have been debarred from any significant role in the political life of the village because of their ritual disabilities.

Positions in the political hierarchy are achieved through effective leadership and organization. However, the achievement factor is

limited by ritual considerations.

As to the role of religion in the political hierarchy the evidence from this village indicates that it is significant in the following ways:

- a.) Positions of influence and power may go only to those who are high in the ritual hierarchy.
- b.) The model of Sanskritization is the Brahman.
- c.) Sanskritization has to be a group phenomenon.

## ECONOMIC HIERARCHY

Sripuram is a typical Indian village and like other Indian villages its economic hierarchy has undergone many changes during the last fifty years. The population was made up of five principal economic categories, the mirasdar landowners, the Non-Brahman cultivating castes, artisan castes, servicing castes and the Adi-Dravida Untouchables.

The entire cultivable land of the village belonged to the Brahman mirasdars and to a single family of Maratha. Six families owned more than fifty acres including one which owned more than one hundred acres. Other families owned less than fifty acres each.

The mirasdars did not cultivate the fields themselves and considered it improper to work with plough. The cultivation was carried on by Non-Brahmans. The most important cultivating castes were the Vellala, and the Kella groups. (Table 16).

The artisan castes comprised Goldsmith, Carpenters, and Potter. The village had no Blacksmith, Weavers and Basket-makers. The servicing castes comprised of Priests, Temple-servants, Barber and Washerman. Unlike the popular belief that only Brahmans are priest or all Brahmans are priests, the case in Sripuram was not so. Only two Brahmans served as priests and that only for the Agraharam. The priest included in the servicing caste was not a Brahman. He was a Pandram, an off-shoot of the Vellalas, and served only the Non-Brahmans. The Temple-servants, the Melakkaran supplied pipes and drums to the temples. The Barber and Washerman received annual payments in kind in addition to

small grants of land. Other artisans and village servants were paid in kind for piece work.

The Adi-Dravidas worked as farm labourers. No Adi-Dravida owned land, nor was any a tenant.

This hierarchy which corresponded to the ritual ranking has changed since then. Most of its land has gone from the Maratha family. The Brahman mirasdars have lost nearly one quarter of their ancestral property.

Ownership has dispersed even within the Agraharam. Unlike the earlier practice, title of land does not rest with the head of the family. Wives and daughters also hold titles of ownership and estates have been fragmented. That is why though the biggest landholder owns only twenty acres of land in the eyes of law, in actuality he is an effective owner of a larger area. Ownership of land has also dispersed beyond the boundaries of the Agraharam. Half of the landowners are living outside the village. Four out of five biggest mirasdars do not live in Sripuram. Landownership is no longer restricted to the Brahmans. Many individuals from the Vellala, the Kalla and Padayachi castes as well as notably from the Cheri have acquired some land in recent years. Though there are only three Adi-Dravida landowners, their average holding being only one acre, the very fact that they are buying land marks a change in the traditional economic hierarchy.

Changes have also taken place in the composition of those categories who worked as tenants and those who worked as farm labourers fifty years ago.



Many Non-Brahmans have become renters and no longer cultivate the land themselves and sublet it to the Adi-Dravida. This enables the Non-Brahmans to supplement their income from sources other than agriculture and gives the Adi-Dravidas a greater measure of economic security.

In addition to the changes in the pattern of ownership of land and tenancy there have been many other changes in the earlier economic relations. In the first place the landowners are no longer able to act as patrons and economically superiors over their tenants and servicing castes. Their fragmented holdings have resulted in lower incomes. At the same time the cost of living is higher than before. Consequently, their economic relations with the servicing castes are becoming contractual. To quote Beteille:

Today not only has the proportion of landowners resident in the village gone down, but fragmentation has greatly reduced the size of individual or family holdings. Together with this, the cost of living has gone up, since landowners have very often to support one or more children studying outside. This makes it very difficult for the mirásdar to meet his traditional obligations to tenants and to artisans and servicing groups. Formerly at festivals such as Deepavali and Pongal, as well as on other occasions landowners were expected to give liberally to a host of dependents. Today most of them cannot easily afford to do this. As their ability to distribute patronage became weakened, their power and influence over tenants and dependents also tend to wane (P. 201).

Further, Sripuram is increasingly being linked with the wider economy. The artisans and village servants have their clientage outside the village also, and the traditional payments made to them by the farmers in Sripuram are only a part of their total incomes. Again, a fairly large number of individuals mostly from the Agraharam are working as clerks,

teachers, etc., outside the village. The Agraharam receives over Rs. 3,500 every month in the form of money orders from them.

To sum up: The Brahmans are still the highest in the present economic hierarchy, the Non-Brahmans are second and the Adi-Dravida third. The difference between the economic hierarchy of today and of yesterday is that the gulf between the segments is much less than it was before and mobility from one to the other is taking place.

## B

The principal factor in the earlier economic hierarchy was the high ritual rank of the Brahmans. Rulers and princes had granted them lands partly because they could maintain control over the population more effectively with their help and partly because they thought it an act of merit. Sastri writes:

Faith is the unique merit of the gift of land (bhu-dana) was very common and frequently acted on by those who could afford it. Thus it came about that new colonies of pious and learned Brahmans were settled in the different parts of the country and gained control of local affairs through the sabha and its executive (1955: 492-3).

Another factor in the earlier hierarchy was the attitudes of the Non-Brahmans and the Untouchables toward the Brahmans. It was considered improper on the part of the low caste not to acknowledge the superior rank of a Brahman in one way or another. This contention is supported by a report from Russell who mentions that many orthodox low caste men in Central India would drink that water in which the toe of a Brahman had been dipped. (1916: 382).

Changes in the traditional hierarchy came about on account of certain practices and values of the mirasdars. In the first place they were given to inordinate expenditure, conspicuous consumption, betting and gambling. It was on these accounts that the Maratha family once wealthy is no longer so. Secondly, the mirasdars were not willing to take to manual work of any kind. Their hostility toward handling of

plough led them to seek Western education in the cities which alone could qualify them for white collar jobs. Once employed in the city they became absentee landlords. Later many of them sold their lands away.

A factor of major importance which brought changes in the economic hierarchy has been the governmental legislation. The adult franchise recognized the equality of all citizens in the eyes of law irrespective of their caste and origin.

Discriminatory measures favouring the Untouchables granted a certain percentage of seats in educational institutions and government offices. These measures contributed largely toward an enhancement of the self concept as well as the economic positions of the Non-Brahman castes.

Three legislative measures, one which fixed the maximum limit of an individual's holding at 30 acres, the second which fixed the maximum area of owner cultivated plot at  $6 \frac{2}{3}$  acres, The third which gave greater security to tenants, has a more direct impact on the economic hierarchy within the village. The land was fragmented and the distinction between effective ownership and title became widespread. Outsiders notably sons-in-law, mappillai became landowners in Sripuram. Land changed hands more rapidly than ever before. The mirasars sold 200 acres immediately after the act which laid down maximum limits on holdings was passed in 1961. Undoubtedly it was mainly because of legislative measures that many Non-Brahmans and even the Adi-Dravidas became landowners.

Let me now turn to the question, how far are the various positions in the economic hierarchy ascribed and how far are they achieved? Beteille writes:

Today it is possible to achieve a variety of economic and political positions in spite of one's birth in a particular caste, although the latter is still very important in setting limits within which choice in the former is possible (P. 45).

It is on this account that the Brahmans have chosen not to take to plough in spite of the fact that owner cultivation brings more money than letting the land to others. To quote Beteille again:

Property by itself does not create social honour, although it is generally a precondition to it. Thus, when a Vellala requires land, he does not automatically move up in the scale of social honour; for this he is required, in addition, to Sanskritize his style of life (P. 190).

This is because low ritual status and wealth are incompatible in the villagers eyes. Positions in the economic hierarchy are rationally motivated as well as achieved in the cases of Kallas, Vellalas and three families of Adi-Dravidas. They have improved their economic position through purchase of land in the village.

As regards the question what is the role of religion in the economic hierarchy, the answer is the same as in the cases of the villages discussed earlier. Beteille remarks that Kallas transform themselves into Maravas, and Ahamudiyas into Vellalas.

Yet there are significant differences between social mobility in the caste system and social mobility in the class system. In the later it is the individual who moves up or down, whereas in the former entire communities change their position. (P. 190).

It has to be "the entire community" because of the ritual links which bind it together. It is important here to note the comments of Srinivas on changes in the ceremonial practices in different parts of India. He writes that there is an increasing tendency to reduce the number of ceremonies on the occasions of marriage etc., but funeral rites and the annual shraddha continues to be performed as before.

And further:

Not only caste but also kinship is bound up with pollution ideas. Thus, births, as well as deaths results in pollution for specific periods for members of the kinship group, death pollution being more rigorous than birth pollution (1966: 125, 120).

VILLAGE LIFE  
IN NORTHERN INDIA

BY  
OSCAR LEWIS

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## RAMPUR

Rampur is situated at a distance of 15 miles from Delhi, in North India. It has a population of 1095 consisting mainly of Jats, a people of Indo-Scythian origin. It is one of the many Jat villages in this area. The Jats numbered 8,377,819 in the villages around Delhi in 1931.

Rampur is a nucleated settlement. The Jats live in the center of the village and the other castes live in the outskirts. Each caste has its own block.

The total cultivable land in the village is 784 acres and cultivation is carried on with Persian wells and canals. Annual rainfall ranges from 22 to 30 inches.

The caste composition of the village is as follows in Table 17.



Table 17

	<u>Caste</u>	<u>Families</u>
	Jat	78
Chamar	Leatherworker	20
	Brahman	15
Bhangi	Sweeper	10
Kumhar	Potter	7
Jhinver	Water-Carrier	5
Dhobi	Washerman	4
Khati	Carpenter	4
Nai	Barber	3
Chipi	Calico-Printer or Tailor	2
Lohar	Blacksmith	1
Baniya	Merchant	1
		<hr/>
		150 (1095 persons)

## POLITICAL HIERARCHY

The Jats are higher than other castes in the political hierarchy in Rampur. This is manifested in two ways. In the first place the headmen are all Jats. In the second place the statutory panchayat is clearly Jat dominated. Says Lewis, "when there are conflicts between the Jats and the lower castes the latter are not in a good position to defend their interest" (P. 27). However, the fact that the panchayat has become a forum for the airing of more or less trivial disputes between individuals (P. 27) rather than an effective judicial body, shows that a more detailed analysis of intra and inter-caste relations is necessary for a clearer understanding of the political hierarchy in the village.

The Jat lineages and clans are grouped within Rampur into units locally known as panas. The village is divided almost equally into two panas, Pana Dhan Singh and Pana Harditt. Pana Dhan Singh consists of lineages of Dabas and Kharab clans. Pana Harditt consists of lineages of Dabas and Deswal clans. The Dabas are said to be the descendants of one Dabas who settled in the village in the twelfth century. The Deswals and the Kharabs who were effines of the Dabas came to the village some-times later. These days the two panas are of approximately equal strength. Pana Dhan Singh has forty families and Pana Harditt has thirty-eight. Each pana has an equal amount of land and is represented by a separate headman.

There are three factions in each pana. Pana Dhan Singh contains factions A, F, and D and Pana Harditt contains factions B, C, and E. In each

pana two of the factions are hostile to each other and one is neutral. The hostile factions within each pana combine with one of the groups in the opposite pana so that each hostile faction is hostile to two groups (one in each pana) and friendly to a third.

The ages of these factions range from 12 to 100 years but all of them are off-shoots of larger factions which emerged nearly 150 years ago. It is reported that about twenty years before the mutiny in 1857 a quarrel arose between the Dabas clan and their sister's sons, the Kharabs over the possession of some land in Rampur. The latter were successful in maintaining their hold on the disputed property and the quarrel did not remain limited to the village only. There were many violent cases, the most violent being when a Dabas girl was abducted by a Kharab young man as a result of which fifteen persons were wounded and one killed. Since then there have been many subdivisions and realignments of the factions. An important shift in faction membership took place during the early years of the present century when the Harditt lineage lost headmanship to the Jaimel lineage. It seems that though there is no evidence of active hostilities among the Jat factions these days, yet the factional rivalries contribute very largely towards making the statutory panchayat an ineffective body.

The higher position of the Jats as a whole in the political hierarchy in the village is also manifested in their disputes with the Sweepers and the Leatherworkers. It was customary on the part of the Sweepers to raise chickens and pigs in order to supplement their meager income.

The Jats objected to this practice on the grounds that the chicken spoiled the dung cakes and the pigs damage the crops. The Sweepers complied. However, the case of the Leatherworkers has been less favourable for the Jats. In 1926 they refused to pay their customary house tax to the Jats. The matter was taken to the court. The Jats won the case and the Leatherworkers were forced to pay the tax. In 1938 the problem again came to a head because the Leatherworkers had failed to pay the house tax for the previous ten years. The matter did not reach the court because the Jats agreed not to insist on the payment of arrears in return for regular payments in the future. The Leatherworkers continued to pay tax till 1947 but have not done so since then. Meanwhile the relations between the Leatherworkers and the Jats have been worsening steadily. In 1933 following the advice of the Arya Smaj (Hindu reform movement), the Leatherworkers stopped begar (forced free labour) for the Jats. They also brought a criminal case against the Jats. The Jats were also made to pay fines if they bury their own dead cattle instead of giving them over to the Leatherworkers as stipulated in the shart wajib-ul-urz (list of customs and conditions affecting management of village). The estrangement between the two castes appears to have increased markedly in the post Independence period, though the Jats have the final say in the village.

## B

All the village land, including the house sites is owned by the Jats, the other castes are thus living there more or less at the sufference of the Jats. It was this crucial relationship to the land, with the attendant power of eviction, which made it possible for the Jats to exact begar service from the Camars (Leatherworkers) in the past and still enables them to dominate the other caste groups (PP. 79-80).

Another factor in the political primacy of the Jats is that most of them are owner cultivators and unlike the landowning Brahmans in Sripuram live in the village and take active interest in the village life. Further the Jats are the most numerous (648 in a total population of 1095) as well as a well organized caste in the village. In spite of many factions they have a powerful caste panchayat. The panchayat has both judicial and regulatory functions. It sanctions the celebration of kaj (funerary rite) as well as permission to distribute sweets on the occasion of the birth of a son. The panchayat may refuse to accord its sanction. In such an eventuality no one will <sup>t</sup>attend the kaj nor will anyone accept the sweets.

Finally, the fact that the Jats are a clean caste has legitimized their political primacy. Were the Jats on the wrong side of the pollution barrier, other clean castes in the village would probably not have accepted their political superiority. Evidence supporting this contention consists of some events which took place in 1933. It is reported that in response to the call of Arya Smaj to do away with untouchability, many Jats drank water at the hands of the Leatherworkers. Later on however, these Jats were boycotted by the local Brahmans in spite of the fact that these Brahmans worked as tenants of the Jats (P. 73).

The low position of the Sweepers in the political hierarchy as manifested by their abandonment of the practice of raising poultry and pigs is evidently due to their economic dependence upon the Jats.

Lewis writes:

All the Bhangis (Sweepers) are heavily in debt and owe money to the Jats. In the past they used to borrow from their jajmans, either interest free or at very low rate, but now they must pay from 12 to 18 percent a year. Moreover it is not easy to get loans. If a Bhangi approaches one of the Jats for this purpose, he may be told sarcastically to seek help from the Congress Party or from one of the politicians the Bhangi voted for on election day (P. 71).

What may be described as a defiant position of the Leatherworkers is due to many factors. Probably they are the best organized and politically conscious low caste in the village. As far back as 1926, they decided collectively not to pay house tax and carried the matter to the court. Their frequent recourse to the authorities for intervention indicates that they are unwilling to accept the political primacy of the Jats. Another factor which explains their behaviour is their gradual disassociation from the village economy. During the World War II many of them obtained jobs in the nearby ordinance factories. Even after the end of the War and the consequent unemployment, they did not return to their traditional occupation in the village. These days in a total of twenty families, only two work as shoemakers. In all probability even these families do not restrict marketing of their product to Rampur alone.

Numerical strength of the Leatherworkers is another factor which has contributed to their defiance of the Jats. They rank third in the village (Table 17) in regard to population. This enables them to act more independently than other low castes.

How far are the positions which the Jats and others occupy in the political hierarchy achieved? How far are the positions ascribed?

In the case of Jats their position is achieved in so far as they took possession of Rampur and the adjoining villages and were able to maintain their hold. The positions of lower castes is ascribed in so far as they cannot attain a higher position so long as they are on the wrong side of the pollution line.

What is the role of religion in political hierarchy? It is necessary to examine the role of kinship in political relations for an answer to this question. Let me begin with an examination of the relations between kinship and factions. Table 18 shows the clan composition of the six Jat factions in the village.

Table 18

Jat Faction	Clan Composition
A	Dabas + Kharabs
B	Dabas + Deswal
C	Dabas
D	Dabas + Kharabs
E	Dabas + Dhaya
F	Kharabs

It is clear from the above Table that in factions C and F, faction and clan are synonymous, and in the remaining four factions, no faction

contains more than lineages of two clans. Lewis comments on the close relations between factions and clans as follows:

The role of kinship in the composition of factions is extremely important. In questioning informants about the membership of their particular faction they tend to equate their faction with their kinship group, even when they are aware that the two may not entirely coincide. This is particularly true when kin belong to separate but friendly factions. There is a strong reticence, however, to volunteer the information that close kin belong to hostile factions. But when the question is put directly it will be admitted. There is not a single case of brothers belonging to separate factions, only one case of first and second cousins, and only four cases (out of fourteen) of third cousins (P. 118-9).

The role of kinship in political relations is also evident in the manner in which the Jats have organized themselves. The Jat caste council in Rampur is structurally a part of caugama (four villages) caste council which in turn is a part of bisagama (twenty villages) caste council. It seems that the political and kinship units overlap in the case of the Jat caste. The bisagama is also an exogamous unit. Some villages in this unit, are dada (grandfather) villages, and some are dadi (grandmother) villages. Some villages are recognized politically more important than others. For example there are caudher (leader) villages and others as vizir (minister) villages, Lewis remarks on this phenomenon as follows:

A typology of peasant societies must also include as a variable the role of kinship, that is, the extent to which the society is organized on a kinship basis. Where the kinship basis is pervasive, as in Rampur, we can say that the society is more primitive or tribal (P. 376).

My contention is that the kinship roles emanate from Hindu religion and



it is in this sense that religion is a factor in the political hierarchy. An example of such kinship roles is provided by ceremonials. This is the reason why the composition of the Jat factions coincide with clan and maximal lineages. There is not a single case of brothers belonging to different factions.

Another example of the expression of the Hindu religion in kinship relations is found in the rules governing marriage.

The search for a bridegroom is complicated by involved rules relating to caste, locality, and clan. The main features of these rules, except with regard to caste, is the requirement of exogamy. Caste rules demand that all members marry within the caste. A Jat must marry a Jat, a Brahman a Brahman, and so on. These endogamous rules are adhered to without exception in Rampur. There are no cases of intercaste marriage. Close inter-marriage within the caste is also prevented by the exogamous rules for village and clan (P. 160).

In his comparison of Rampur with Tepoztlan, Mexico, Lewis writes:

In Rampur the question of whom one can marry is much more complicated. Marriage is controlled by a combination of factors, namely, caste endogamy, village exogamy, limited territorial exogamy, and clan exogamy. . . Our study of Rampur showed that the 266 married women living in the village came from about two hundred separate villages at distances of up to 40 miles (PP. 319-20).

## ECONOMIC HIERARCHY

Rampur is a village of owner cultivators. Generally speaking the holdings are small, the biggest being 52.1 acres. The rest are much smaller. Table 19 shows the range of holdings in the village.

Table 19

<u>Size of Holding (acres)</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>
Less than 1	3
1 - 4	22
4 -10	29
10 -20	17
20 -40	6
over 40	1
	<hr/>
	78

The entire cultivable land is owned by the Jats, and no Jat family is landless. In a total of seventy-eight families, only twelve do not cultivate their land themselves. Forty-two of the remaining sixty-six families find it necessary to supplant their income from outside sources. Twelve Jats are employed as teachers, fifteen are employed in the police and in the army, fifteen work as subordinate civil servants in Delhi and five receive pensions.

Five Brahman families work as tenants of the Jats. The rest of the families follow a variety of occupations. Five work as teachers, seven

are factory workers, one is a tailor and one makes his living by selling silk. There is no temple in the village and no Brahman works as temple priest.

Like the Brahmans the Leatherworkers do not follow the traditional calling of their caste. Four work outside the village, three have taken to weaving, four are garden contractors, one is a village watchman, the rest excepting two raise cattle or work as day labourers. Only two families still make shoes but do not handle hides. They have no jajmani relations in the village.

There have been no great changes in the traditional occupation of the Potters. In a total of seven families two work outside the village, but the remaining five continue to make pots and work on jajmani basis. However, their jajmani payments have been substantially slashed in recent years and they have to supplement their income from other sources. Four work as weavers and one grows vegetables. Similarly the five Water-carriers find it necessary to have additional sources of income, apart from what they receive from their jajmans. All of them have taken to vegetable gardening.

There are four families of Carpenters. Carpenters are working as teachers and the remaining two still work as carpenters and maintain the customary jajmani relations. As the jajmani payments are insufficient for a living, they have some other sources of income such as working as mason and selling milk.

The traditional calling of the Chipi is calico-printing but the two families in Rampur have taken to tailoring. They work on cash basis for the Jats and Brahmans and on reciprocal basis for servicing castes.

In the case of Barber, only one of the three families in Rampur still follows his traditional calling and to maintain jajmani relations. The other two no longer work as barbers. One is a school teacher and the other is a truck driver.

There are four families of Washermen. Only two still pursue their traditional occupation and work on jajmani basis. One is working in a factory near Delhi and the other works as an agricultural labourer.

The only family of the Baniya, the merchant, continues to follow his traditional calling. He sells grains and other commodities, but at the same time maintains a type of jajmani relations with Brahmans and servicing castes. Similarly the single family of Blacksmith and six families of the Sweeper caste have not abandoned their ancestral occupation and continue to work on jajmani basis. Four Sweepers have found work outside the village.

A description of the economic structure is incomplete without noting the outside income of the different castes as well as the extent of their indebtedness. Table 20 shows the outside income.

The extent of indebtedness in the village is quite significant. The Blacksmith, the Carpenter, the Potter, the Sweeper castes are under heavy debt. It is notable, however, that generally speaking those

families which are working on jajmani basis are in debt.

<u>Table 20</u>				
<u>Caste</u>	<u>Total Number of Families</u>	<u>Number of Families with Outside Income</u>	<u>Average Monthly Income per Family</u>	<u>Total Outside Income</u>
Jat	78	42	145	6077
Brahman	15	10	142	1421
Leather-worker	20	5	53	265
Sweeper	10	4	72	289
Potter	7	2	45	90
Water-carrier	5	0	0	0
Carpenter	4	2	250	498
Washerman	4	1	80	80
Barber	3	2	115	230
Calico-printer	2	0	0	0
Blacksmith	1	0	0	0
Merchant	1	1	100	100
<hr/>				
Total	150	69		Rs. 9050

The economic hierarchy in Rampur may be viewed from two angles, intercaste and intracaste. In the intercaste economic hierarchy the Jats and Brahmans are higher than the servicing castes, the Sweeper being the lowest. Though differences in wealth exist within each caste including the Jats, the intracaste economic hierarchy within servicing castes is relevant for the purposes of the present discussion. Those families in the servicing castes who do not work withing the jajmani system are higher than those who do.

## B

In this section I ask why do the Jats and the Brahmans have direct access to the economic resources (i.e. intercaste economic hierarchy) and why are those servicing caste families who are not working within the jajmani system economically higher than those who are (intracaste economic hierarchy).

The principal source of production in Rampur is land. The traditional occupation of the Jats is agriculture. One of the reasons why the Jats have direct access to resources therefore is their traditional occupation. However, agriculture as a traditional occupation alone does not explain the position of the Jats. A second major factor is their caste organization. It is on account of the support of their caste as a whole in the region that they have been able to maintain control in Rampur. The caugama and bisagama Jat panchayats are the organ through which collective caste activities are carried on.

The reasons why the Brahmans are second to the Jats and higher than other castes in the economic hierarchy are firstly, that five of them are working as occupancy tenants of the Jats and as such have direct access to resources, and secondly, that the income of the rest of the families from outside sources is highest in the village excepting that of the Jats. But the position of the Brahmans in the economic hierarchy cannot be attributed to their traditional calling. In actuality it is not considered proper for a Brahman to touch the plough. Therefore rational motivation appears to be the important

factor in the second position of the Brahmans in the economic hierarchy. The case of the Brahman who has become a tailor and that of the other who is selling silk supports this contention.

The reasons for the lower positions of those working within the jajmani system than those who are working outside the village lie in the increased use of cash economy, rising prices of agricultural products, employment opportunities outside the village, increase in population and subdivisions of holding into smaller plots. For example in 1910 there were 38 holdings in the village. In 1953 there are 78. In 1910 no holding measured less than 6.25 acres. In 1953 the smallest holding measures .5 acres and there are 36 holdings within the range of .5 and 6.25 acres. This explains why it is becoming increasingly difficult for the landowners to meet their jajmani obligations and to insist upon slashing down these payments. They also find it economical to sell their farm products and to employ paid labor instead of maintaining the traditional jajmani relations. At the same time wages paid to workers in the factories and other places outside the village have tended to keep up with the rising cost of living. It is in this manner that the economic gap between those who work within the jajmani system and those who work outside the village is becoming wider and wider.

Are the positions in the economic hierarchy achieved or ascribed and secondly, what is the role of religion in the economic hierarchy are the two questions which have to be answered here.

The positions of the castes are ascribed in the intercaste economic hierarchy. There is a summations of roles namely, the higher castes are wealthier than the lower ones. That the positions are achieved is cleared from what I have characterized as the intracaste economic hierarchy. Many families of lower castes are becoming wealthier than upper caste families notably those whose landholdings are uneconomic. Yet, as in the cases of other Indian villages examined in this thesis, the caste identity in ritual and ceremonials is as strong as ever. There is no evidence of the acceptance of those individuals who do not follow their traditional occupations into caste other than their own. Lewis describes the persistance of the identification of an individual with his caste in the following passage.

Meanwhile, despite the weakening of the jajmani system and the inroads of a money economy in Rampur, the social aspects of the caste system have changed very little. The rules of endogamy are not questioned. In spite of the influence of the Arya Smaj, the traditional caste rules governing interdining and taking of water still prevail. The Jats will not share their hookas with Camars (Leatherworkers) or sit on the same string cot with them. When community project speakers address the people of Rampur it would be democratic assemblages, the Camars remain on the outskirts of the crowd. Patterns of hierarchy and social distance persist, and the psychology of caste still permeates interpersonal relationships.

In some ways caste identifications have even strengthened in Rampur. Among the Jats the emphasis on caste loyalty may represent a defensive reaction to the weakening of the jajmani system, while among the Camars it signifies a united stand against the higher-caste landowners (P. 83).

My assertion is that the identification of an individual with his caste is founded upon beliefs in the Hindu religion.



MALAKPUR  
NORTH WEST PAKISTAN

## MALAKPUR

Malakpur is situated in Tahsil (subdistrict) Talagang, District Campbellpur in the province of Panjab, West Pakistan. The District lies on the eastern bank of the Indus and stretches from Attock to the border of Mainwali in the south. It has extremes of climate and is a land of plains and plateaux. Annual rainfall ranges from 14 to 24 inches and irrigation is carried on through wells and seasonal streams.

Historically, the area has been the home of Awans. It was referred to as Mahal-Awanan (the Awan District) in Abul Fazal's revenue records in the sixteenth century. The Awans were numerically largest in the District. (Dist. Gazt. 1907: 64,70). In the Subdistrict of Talagang alone they comprised 83 percent of the population (Baden-Powell, 1896: 271). Probably they have been also the largest landowners in the past, because in spite of their reported dispossessions by the Sikhs, and the British they owned 36 percent of land in the District in 1901.

Tradition tells that Malakpur was founded by one Viru, an Awan,<sup>1</sup> by Kaom<sup>2</sup>. He had five sons. One of them continued to live in Malakpur

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The origin of Awan is uncertain. The Awans themselves contend that the word Awan is a derivative of the Arabic word mua-wan, meaning one who assists. The mua-wan, they hold are those who in answer to the call of the Caliph of Bagdad, volunteered to assist Sultan Muhmud of Ghazni in his campaigns in India in the early eleventh century. Thus, they claim a foreign origin. However, the word Viru probably a corruption of the Sanskrit Bir indicates that the Awans, at least those of Malakpur are of local origin.

The word koam literally means a tribe or a nation. In common usage it is used in two different senses depending upon the context. The Awans are referred to as a kaem by non-Awans. The Awans themselves refer to their subdivisions or lineages also as kaom e.g., Hafzal kaom.

but the others made their own settlements not far away from Malakpur. With the passage of time these settlements grew in size and numbers and today forms a cluster of five villages collectively called Viruwal.

The majority of the Awans living in Malakpur today, are said to be the descendants of Bathal and Baroji, two grandsons of Veru. Their different lineages are also referred to as kaoms. Thus the kaoms of the descendants of Bathal are Bathral, Niaz Ali Khail, Nur Mohammadal. Hajal, Khani Khail, Bakhshal, Mir Mohammadal, Khurshedi, Nural and Fateh Sheri and the kaoms of the descendants of Baroje are Bajrals, Jhamal, Jafral Hafzal and Sher Bazie. The Gartal, Achral, Jhakral and Sadqual kaoms, also Awans came to the village from other places sometimes during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Excepting a common koam name Awan, no kinship links seems to have existed between these groups and the earlier Awans of Malakpur.

Until the beginning of the British rule in the Panjab the entire population of Malakpur lived in the original settlement. Since then hamlets, called dhokes of various sizes have sprung up in the outskirts of the village. The pattern of the emergence of the dhokes has been the same. After the partitioning of land among the heirs of a deceased person, one or more of the heirs might decide to move out from the ancestral home, and lay the foundation of a dhoke. As a rule the dhoke is referred to after the name of its founder. But sometimes the dhoke is named after any peculiarity of the terrain in which it is located, e.g. Dhoke Baila, called so because it is situated in baila, (land where river

overflows). However, all dhokes are not a result of partitioning of ancestral property. The Gartai, Sadqual, Achrai and Jhakrai were given lands by the local Awans and were permitted to make their own dhokes.

These days there are thirteen large and some smaller dhokes in Malakpur. The population of the larger dhokes as well as that of the original settlement is given below:

TABLE 21

<u>Dhoke</u>	<u>Koam</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Baila	(Achrai)	143
Jhanda	(Nur Mohammadai)	130
Hafzal	(Hafzal)	320
Sadqual	(Sadqual)	316
Imrai	(Imrai)	76
Jhamai	(Jhamai)	103
Sherfa	(Khani Khail)	178
Fetch Sheri	(Fateh Sheri)	84
Sadqual (2nd)	(Sadqual)	73
Jhamai	(Jhamai)	233
Hakim Wali	(Meher Mohammadai + Nurai)	225
Bakshal	(Bakshal)	105
Hajal	(Gartai)	320
		<u>2306</u>

The population of the original settlement is 878 persons bringing the total population to 3183. Compared to population of the village given in 1961 Census of Pakistan the figure given here is less by about 300.

This is mainly because a number of tiny dhokes are not included in my figure. The kaom composition of Malakpur is given below.

TABLE 22

<u>Koam</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Awan	2778
Sayyad	21
Lohar - Blacksmith	51
Mochi - Cobbler cum Shoemaker	60
Teli- Oil-presser	23
Dhabba - Calico-printer cum weaver	52
Nai - Barber	54
Kubhar - Potter	13
Milar - Vegetable grower cum Persian well operator	61
Musalli - Farm labourer	49

According to the records of the patwari (village accountant) the total cultivable land is 9606 acres. There are 86 Persian wells and one Jhalar (bucket and wheel for lifting water from a stream) but they irrigate only a fraction of the land and therefore much of the cultivation depends upon rainfall.

There are five mosques in the main settlement in addition to a mosque in every large dhoke.

## POLITICAL HIERARCHY

Until about twenty years ago the Awans were higher in the political hierarchy in Malakpur. The manifestations of this hierarchy can be traced to the Mughal times.

The Mughals interfered very little with the ancient customs in the village. They incorporated the village into the administration as a unit for revenue and police purposes (Tinker, 1954: 19). It was customary on the part of the amil (revenue officer) to hold the hereditary chief of a clan or a local landowner responsible for the collection of revenue. The individual share of the cultivators was decided by the chief or the landowners of the village (Baden-Powell, 1896: 425).

The British made a distinction between agriculturist and non-agriculturist sections of population and ranked the former higher than the latter in the villages. The Awans being agriculturists were ranked higher than the kammis in Malakpur. It was on this account that no kammi was appointed as a lumberdar or nominated to the District Board or any other local body.

Within the village an indicator of the political hierarchy was the number of villagers who came to the "men's house" usually maintained by big landowners. It was there that the huka (hubble bubble) was served at any time and men gossiped, played cards or lounged on the cots. It was there also that the landowner listened to his tenants, discussed affairs of the day and met in a parea\* (informal village council) to decide their

\*The parea has no connection with the government and its composition depends upon the particular case to be put before it. Usually a few respectable landowners and kammis take part in it.

disputes. It was there also that a traveler could find food and spend a night. As Awans were the only big landowners, they alone could maintain men's houses. There were five lumberdars in Malakpur, a Bathral, a Barjral, a Jhamal, a Jafral and a Khurshedi. They maintained men's houses and it is reported that each attracted almost an equal number of villagers. Thus all were equally influential. Besides, none of them hesitated to go to another's men's house, thereby indicating friendliness.

The political hierarchy had changed considerably by 1969. It is necessary to narrate events which contributed to the change for an understanding of the political relations among the different kaoms in Malakpur these days.

1951 was an important year in the political history of Malakpur. Elections for the Provincial Legislative Assembly were held for the first time in that year on the adult franchise basis. Before this there had prevailed the rule of limited franchise, according to which only literate and landowning people could vote. Malakpur was considered an important source of votes because of its large population and therefore the two contestants for a single seat for the constituency in which Malakpur was situated, came personally to the village to enlist support. One of them was an influential Awan landowner from a neighbouring village and the other was a Sayyed pir (religious leader) from a different village. The Awan who had the Muslim League Party ticket dwelt upon the achievements of his party, namely, the creation of Pakistan and the conference of the right of the inheritance of property as enjoyed by Islam, while the pir

who was an independent candidate, promised to work for an Islamic order in the country. Significantly the pir was successful, in spite of a very high majority of voters being Awans. As was known later the votes of the Awans in Malak Pur were also divided between the two candidates. The approximate alignment is given below.

TABLE 23

<u>Voted for the Pir Candidate</u>	<u>Voted for the Awan Candidate</u>
Hafzal	Half of Sadquals
Bajral	Half of Khurshedis
Jhamal	Indeterminate number from other Kaoms
Bathral	
Half or Khurshedis	
Half of Sadquals	
Indeterminate number of other <u>kaoms</u>	

The elections seemed to have divided the village into two fairly well defined factions. Factionalism was by no means an unusual phenomenon for Malakpur. It went as far back as men could remember. The elections were unusual because actors from outside the village had become important in local conflicts and the traditional mechanisms which restrained the conflicts going too far were weakened. Village disputes were no longer a village affair but sometimes became a matter of prestige for outsiders. It was increasingly becoming an arena where politicians from outside the village struggled for influence. It was with their



support that many Awans brought suits against each other. An incident which illustrates "trial of strength" between factions took place when the officer - in - charge of the local police station was handed an order of immediate transfer. No reason for the immediate transfer was mentioned in the order, but the officer knew that it was a result of his refusal to comply with the "request" of a member of the Provincial Assembly to release a person who was in the police custody at that time.

However, the traditional mechanisms which restrained conflicts going too far did not disappear altogether and continued to be operative. This is evident from the following two incidents which took place in the late fifties.

#### Incident I.

Two groups of men, eight in one and six in the other, armed with ballams (long sticks with steel points) were seen a few feet away from the body of a man laid on a string cot. The body was covered with a white sheet. There were spots of blood on the ground and many of the men were wounded and bleeding. It was clear that a pitched battle had taken place, as a result of which one man had lost his life. A few minutes before I arrived at the spot, the fight had been brought to a halt by an elderly person. Presumably he was called there in all haste. He was riding a horse and he addressed the group from the horse's back. Briefly stated, he said, "I warned this man not to change the boundary line of his field without consulting A. He is dead now and will not be able to shift the boundary line again. R. N. has met me and we have decided to end the

matter. No one will be punished and we shall bear the expenses of the police inquiry. Let us say duai-khair (prayer for peace)". Saying this he raised his hands in prayer and so did the groups, thereby symbolizing an end of the dispute.

#### Incident 2.

It was customary on the part of the kammis to request for a house site from the Awans. The ownership of the site remained unchanged even though the kammis lived there for many years. One of the reasons why the kammis could not own the house site was the Panjab Alienation of Land Act which debarred non-agriculturists to own land. Soon after Independence this act was repealed and distinction between the agriculturists and non-agriculturists became a matter of the past. By the late fifties many kammis had acquired sufficient wealth through trading and had started buying land for themselves. As it happened, the Bathral and the Bajral lumberdars had a common plot which they had inherited. It was necessary to divide the common plot before any sale could be made. However, no agreement had been possible on the division. The matter came to a head when one night, the Bathral lumberdar ploughed and fenced that part of the disputed plot which he thought was his share. Next morning the Bajral lumberdar was furious and sent a man with a drum all over the village and the dhokes to announce "Come on friends of \_\_\_\_\_; if you do not come today, your friendship with him will come to an end". It was a difficult situation for many villagers because until then the Bathrals and the Bajrals had belonged to the same

factions (Table 23). However, within a short while two armed groups were confronting each other. The situation was saved by the elders of different kaoms on the plea that a fight such as that would ruin the village. The two lumberdars agreed to place the matter before a third party and a clash was averted.

There were some major changes in the constitution of Pakistan in the year 1959. A system called the Basic Democracies was introduced, in which, among other provisions, every 1,000 to 1,200 adults elected one representative for the Union Council. A Union Council contained 10 to 12 members and all Union Councils in the country collectively functioned as a college for the election of the president of Pakistan. Malakpur elected three Union Councillors, but the 1959 elections were not hotly contested, perhaps because no one seemed to know what it was all about.

Elections for the Union Council were held again in 1965. These were fought out in Malakpur much more seriously than those in 1959. There were five contestants for three seats, a Jhamal, a Hafzal, a Bakshal, a Bajral and a Khurshedi. The Bajral and Bakshal were defeated. Voters were divided more or less on the following lines.

TABLE 24

<u>Jhamal Candidate</u>	<u>Hafzal Candidate</u>	<u>Khurshedi Candidate</u>
Majority of Bathrals	Majority of Bajrals	Majority of Sadquals
Majority of Hafzals	4 Hafzals	Minority of Gertals
Minority of Jhamals	Majority of Gertals	Minority of Jafrals
Half of Khurshedis	Indeterminate number of other <u>kaoms</u>	Half of Khurshedis
Indeterminate number of other <u>kaoms</u>		Indeterminate number of other <u>kaoms</u>

Soon after the elections a number of supporters of a successful candidate A, went near the house of B, a defeated candidate and celebrated the success of A by singing and dancing. B felt greatly humiliated and decided not to take the matter lying down. A few days later B's men forcibly rounded up some cattle belonging to A and when they were being driven to a cattle shed, N.K. a tenant of A managed to free them from their captors. B's men again attempted to capture the cattle the next day, but once again N. K. foiled their attempts. A few days later N. K. was attacked by B's men on his way to the fields. However, not only did he manage to escape unhurt but also inflicted some injuries to one of his attackers. One dark night N. K. and his brother who had gone to a neighbouring village were way-laid on their way back home. N.K's brother was fatally wounded and died a few days later. The matter went to the court but the alleged attackers were given the benefit of doubt and were acquitted. It is reported that N. K. did an unexpected thing when the news of their acquittal reached him. He congratulated the murderer of

his brother and said to them "I am glad you are back home and it is good that no one else usurped my right to avenge the death of my brother." Nearly two years passed without any move from N. K. and the matter was almost forgotten. One night when marriage celebrations were in progress in B's house, a hail of bullets killed four persons on the spot and wounded many others. N. K. was never seen in the village again.

By 1969 the traditional mechanisms which restrained conflicts appeared to be far less functional than before. The visiting pattern in the men's houses and number of disputes being handled by the police indicated that the Awans were divided into two distinct and hostile factions and that the kammis, many of whom had acquired wealth since Independence had risen in the political hierarchy. The two factions as manifested by the visiting pattern were as follows:

TABLE 25

<u>Bathral Faction</u>	<u>Bajral Faction</u>
Majority of Jhamals	Majority of Sadqual
Majority of Jafral	Majority of Meher Mohammadal
Majority of Hafzal	Minority of Jafral
Majority of Khurshedi	Minority of Khurshedi
Majority of Niaz Ali Khail	Minority of Ichral
Majority of Gertal	Minority of Imral
Minority of Imral	Minority of Bakshal
Minority of Ichral	Minority of Niaz Ali Khail
Minority of Meher Mohammadal	Minority of Gertal
Half of Nur Mohammadal	Half of Nur Mohammadal

In 1969 the members of the Bathral faction had lodged five cases against the members of the Bajral faction, while four cases had been lodged against them by the latter. A copy of the police report made by a Bajral is given below.

Police Report under Section 307 Pakistan Penal Code (attempted murder).

I learned in the morning that my maternal uncle's son had died last night in Dhoke...I left for the Dhoke and was accompanied by B.K. son of S. K. On our way we met F. K. son of G. K. and A. K. son of M. K. who were also going to the same place. As we approached the Dhoke we were suddenly confronted with K. G. son of B. G. (kaom Bathral) and F. N. son of A. N. (Kaom Hafzal). They were armed with guns and pointing the guns at us. K. G. said "die like men" and fired. A bullet grazed my right shoulder and another my thumb. I fell on the ground but in the meantime some men came running from the Dhoke. Upon seeing them K. G. and F. N. fled.

The reason for this attempted murder is that I was engaged to K. G.'s sister, but he was opposed to this marriage. He had warned me earlier that if I insisted upon the marriage the consequences would be disastrous for me.

Reported by L. K., son of P. K. (koam Bajral).

A copy of a police report made by a Bathral is given below.

Police Report under section 307 Pakistan Penal Code (attempted murder).

Last evening my brother S. K. and I were working in our field. Suddenly H. K., son of D. K. (kaom Bajral), N. K. and G. M. K., sons of M. A. K. (kaom Khurshedi) and U. H. K., sons of S. H. K. (kaom Hafzal) and A. K., son of G. K. (kaom Bajral) appeared from the small grove which is situated to the north of our well. H. K. was carrying a gun. Pointing the gun at me he shouted "Today we shall see who stands in the witness box against me" and fired. But in the meantime my brother and I managed to hide in our cattle shed. The sound of firing attracted men from the nearby Dhoke...and the attackers managed to escape.

The reason of this attempted murder is that I was a witness in a case registered against H. K. and I had not agreed to give evidence according to H. K.'s wishes.

Reported by F. K. son of M. K. (kaom Bathral).

To sum up: The Awans were higher in the political hierarchy before 1951. Since then there was no clear hierarchy. There is an unresolved struggle for supremacy between two Awan factions, while some kammis have risen in the hierarchy.

## B

Power over resources, government legislation and a relative self-sufficiency were the three major factors in the political hierarchy in Malakpur before 1951.

The Awans being landowners had power over resources, as a result of which they had power over men as well. Nadel characterizes the association between economic and political roles as involute or combinative relationship (1964: 68). Bailey comments on the association between power over resources and power over men as follows.

In the case of politics and economics both concerned power over resources in men and materials, and I cannot conceive of a system of cooperation where there was not also in the last resort summation of roles (Archiv. Europ. Social IV. 1963: 120).

The association between power over men and power over resources is more marked when a community is relatively isolated. In the case of Malakpur, when it became a part of a larger political arena and less isolated than before the elections in 1951, though the Awans did continue to own land, their roles became less involute, and they lost some of their earlier political power.

The third factor, the government legislation namely the Panjab Alienation of Land Act (1901) appears to have been partly responsible for the low position of the kammis in the political hierarchy. It is difficult to say with any certainty what would have been their position in the absence of these legislative disabilities. Judging from the fact, however, that many kammis have risen in the hierarchy after the abolition of the Act,



their low position during the British times might be attributed to government legislation.

The explanation of the political relations in Malakpur after 1951 is more complex. For instance, we must know why were there intra-kaom factions rather than inter-kaom confrontations like the inter-caste relations in many Indian villages? What is the composition of the factions and why factions are fluid, i.e., why did the factional alignments change a number of times during the last twenty years (Tables 23, 24, 25)?

There were intra-kaom factions rather than inter-kaom confrontations, firstly because intra-kaom disputes are a matter of tradition. Most of the disputes originate in one or more of the following ways.

- a.) Many farmers encroach upon their neighbour's field by slowly moving the boundry line. It takes sometime before the neighbour discovers the encroachment. Usually he reacts by setting the boundary "in order" according to his own thinking. This inevitably leads to serious fights.
- b.) Unattended cattle may cause damage to crops. This is particularly serious when the crops are ready for harvesting. The issue is fought out between the owner of the field and that of the cattle on the spot.
- c.) It is not unusual for parents to betrothe their children before puberty. Sometimes a boy who has received education develops an outlook different from that of his elders. He may refuse to have a "rustic" wife,

thereby causing a serious blow to the honour of her parents. Sometimes however, the refusal may come from the girl's side. This happens when the boy does not measure up to the expectations of her parents.

d.) Suspicions, often ill founded, regarding illicit liaison, arouse intense emotions and may lead to serious fighting, even murders.

e.) A large percentage of villagers is illiterate. They need counseling and guidance particularly in legal problems. Many educated and ambitious Awans become patrons of such individuals and build up a following. A following of this kind is useful for the patron in his own conflicts.

Another factor in the intra-kaom factionalism is a latent, sometimes manifest rivalry within a kinship group. It is referred to as sharika and is fairly widely prevalent throughout the Panjab. It is a rivalry between agnates and affines but more sharp among cousins. In a sharika an individual attempts not to "look small" in the eyes of his kin group in any way. At the same time he hesitates to further the cause of his rivals lest they might outstrip him. It is an attitude which appears to be insignificant yet has an important role in the emergence and persistence of factions.

A third and a new factor in the intra-kaom factionalism was the weakening of the traditional mechanisms of arbitration. It was customary on the part of the elders to intervene in disputes and to restrain them from going too far. The situation has been well described by Gluckman.

Conflicts are a part of social life and custom appears to exacerbate these conflicts: but in doing so custom also restrains the conflicts from destroying the wider social order.

further:

Again, I am not suggesting that divided loyalties and interests will always prevent a dispute arising, or prevent social dislocation and change. Loyalties and interests are not thus beautifully balanced. What I am saying is that these conflicting loyalties and divisions of allegiance tend to inhibit the development of open quarrelling, and that the greater is likely to be the cohesion in a wider range of relationships - provided that there is a general need for peace, and recognition of a moral order in which this peace can flourish (1955: 2, 25).

Factionalism took a new turn when "recognition of a moral order in which this peace can flourish" was undermined by the elections to the Union Councils in 1965. The elections to the provincial Assembly 1951 had brought in powerful outsiders in the village arena but they were few and far away and active on a few occasions only. The Union Council elections were different because those who had hitherto restrained conflicts from going too far themselves became engaged in a struggle for supremacy. It was like "men of the earth" (Evans-Pritchard, 1940), themselves locked in a combat.

Why was there not an inter-kaom confrontation like the inter-caste relations in some Indian villages?

There was no inter-kaom confrontation in Malakpur because of a number of reasons, the principal ones being the following.

a.) The Awans feel confident that they are the masters of the village. They command influence not only within the village but also beyond it and it is very difficult for a kammi to seriously challenge their authority. The power of the landlords such as that of the Awans has been described by Wiser in the passage given below.

The leaders of our village are so sure of their power that they make no effort to display it. The casual visitor finds little to distinguish them from other farmers. (1951: 18-9)

b.) Numerical preponderance of the Awans is another important factor which has contributed to a submissive attitude on the part of the kammis. The kammis constitute only about eleven percent of the total population and if taken separately according to their respective occupations the percentage of each group is insignificant as compared to the Awan population.

c.) Individual social mobility as contrasted to social mobility in groups in Indian villages is a major factor. The reasons why there is no group social mobility include the following.

i.) There is no concept of "relational pollution". Death brings no pollution to any agnate, nor is it necessary for any of the agnates to perform funerary rites (namaz janaza). Burial is a responsibility of the community in which the deceased was living at the time of his death, irrespective of his origin.

ii.) The concept of kaom is vague. The Awans, their segments and sub-segments are all referred to as kaom. This is illustrated by the genealogy of the Hafzals (Table 26). This Table shows that the kaom concept tend to overlap in the cases of the Awans, the Hafzals, Main Mohammadals, Kasmals, and Kazi Khails.

The vagueness of the kaom "boundaries" is enhanced by two other factors. Unlike Indian subcastes the kaoms are neither strictly endogamous nor exclusive. Six marriages between Hafzals and Bajrals, nine between Bajrals and Khurshedis, four between Khurshedis and Hafzals, three between Bathrals and Khurshedis, five between Bathrals and Bajrals have taken place during the last thirty years. More significantly, an Awan lumberdar's wife is a daughter of a poor Awan who had married a woman of Musalli kaom. A second Awan lumberdar is married to a Pathan woman from the neighbouring village.

Similarly unlike the Indian castes, there is no evidence of exclusiveness on the part of kaoms. The pattern of social interaction in Malakpur is not different from what has been described by Eglar.

A child learns the caste it belongs to from the time it begins to speak, and tells it when he gives his personal name. Very early, the child also learns that it can marry within its own caste. Yet the fact of belonging to different castes does not create social barriers among the people, all of whom are Muslims, Kammis and Zamindars sit together and may eat together, accept food from one another's house, smoke a common huka, draw water from a common well and pray side by side.

Again:

Landowners and craftsmen, zamindars and kammis, sit in the same group; a zamindar may sit or lie on a cot while a kammi perches on its edge or squats on the ground or on the low wall of the compound surrounding the men's guest house.

Further:

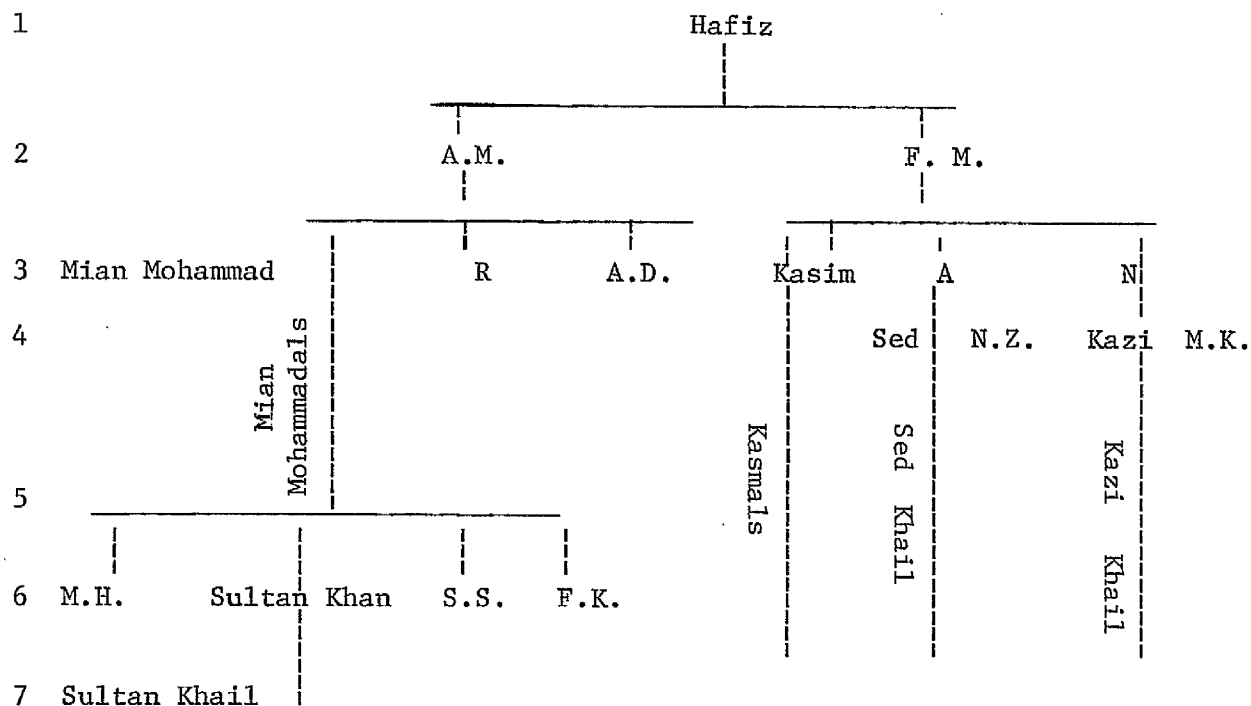
On all important occasions in the houses of the kammis, the chowdhrani (wife of the lumberdar) honours them by her presence. She gives the traditional money, the salami to the bride or the bridegroom. When there is a death in the village or in one of the neighbouring villages, she goes, heading a party of women, to offer condolences and her presence will enhance the importance of the event (1960: 29, 56, 32).

Table 26

THE HAFZALS

Generation

Incombents



Note that the Hafzal kaom consists of a number of smaller kaoms, the Main Mohammadals, Kasmals, Sed Khails, and Kazi Khails. A new kaom Sultan Khail is emerging with the foundation of Dhoke Sultan. More importantly these smaller kaoms which might be called maximal lineages are also collectively referred to as the Hafzals. Like the Marri Baluch it is difficult to lay down any precise formal criterion of grouping among the Awans. (Pehrson, 1966: 18).

The vagueness of the kaom concept has been further enhanced by the absence of "kaom panchayat". This is because there are no separate rules governing the behaviour of kaoms like rules of caste behaviour in India.

A consequence of the vagueness of kaom "boundaries" has been that social mobility on the part of individuals from the kammi kaoms has not been viewed as a threat by the Awans. As has been shown later a number of kammi families have acquired wealth, notably the dhabbas. They abstain from visiting the men's houses or leaders of the Awan factions are even addressed as malakji, a title normally reserved for Awans. Commenting on this phenomenon, a prominent Awan remarked "what can you do if people call them malakji, what difference does it make anyway? We know the reality".

The composition of the faction groups is another question to be considered. As has been shown in Table 26 fission in kaoms begin with a rift among brothers. For example the Kasmals began identifying themselves separately after Kasim had a rift with his brothers A and N. Similarly the descendants of Mian Mohammad, Mian Mohammadals identified themselves as a separate kaom after their ancestral property was partitioned between Main Mohammad and his brothers. In recent years Sultan Khan has built a new dhoke, Dhoke Sultan Khail, after a quarrel with his brothers during the Union Council elections in 1965. Though



the fission among the Hafzals as described here represents processes in other kaoms, a more widespread form of rift is between cousins. This is unlike the composition of faction groups in Rampur where the Jat faction groups are made up of lineages and clans (Table 18).

Significantly the kammis in Malakpur remain cautiously neutral in the factional groupings. They have not moved out from the main settlement and do not live in any dhoke. This is probably because in the words of Bailey structurally, "the system does not allow competition between castes" (Archive Europ. Soc. IV, 1963: 107-24). Likewise according to Nicholas who basis his conclusions on data from 19 villages in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, "intercaste conflict can be the dominant mode of the political conflict in a village only where the subordinate caste is more numerous than the dominant caste" (ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 278).

Why did the factional alignments not remain constant? This appears to be because of the following reasons. (a) Most of the Awans are medium landowners (see Economic Hierarchy). This gives them a certain amount of political and economic independence and enables them to further their personal interests, by choosing groups which serve their ends. (b) There is a difference between de jure and de facto ownership of land. For example according to the records of the patwari, I. K. a Hafzal (Mian Mohammadals) owns one hundred acres but in actuality he has distributed the land among his four sons. The sons work as his tenants and will be recorded as owners of the fields in their possession at the time of his death. This has given I. K. a considerable measure of control over the

political affiliations of his sons but they will follow their own ways after his death and may choose to join opposing factions.

The case of Sultan Khan is interesting. He contested the Union Council elections in 1965, what was stated to be against the wishes of the entire Hafzal kaom including I.K. Many observers believe that Sultan Khan could not act so independently and attribute his behaviour to the "diplomacy" of I. K. who is said to have given his blessings in secret.

How far are the positions of the kaoms in the political hierarchy ascribed or achieved? The higher position of the Awans is ascribed in so far as all zamindar kaoms are regarded higher than their dependents. The zamindars as a category are regarded higher because of their power over resources, ability to provide employment and protection to their kammis. Though the more land a zamindar owns the greater is his prestige, yet the very fact of being a zamindar earns an individual a certain measure of respect.

This raises the questions, can a kammi achieve a position equal to or higher than that of a zamindar, and secondly, how significant is what Bailey has characterized as localization. The cases of the two dhabba families who have acquired some wealth in recent years indicate that kammis may achieve a higher position in the political hierarchy. Many poorer Awans treat them with deference and address them as malakji. This is probably because the criterion of ranking in political hierarchy is changing from being a zamindar to ostensible riches and "right"

connections outside the village. A striking example of the changing position of the kammis in the hierarchy comes from a neighbouring village. A prominent landowner and sometimes a high official, had unlawfully occupied some land abandoned by Hindu migrants in 1947. No questions were raised by anyone until 1969 when a refugee kammi reported the matter to the Martial Law Administrator, as a result of which the land was confiscated by the Government.

The instances of the dhabba families also indicate that the role of localization in Malakpur as contrasted to that communities in India, e.g. Bisipara is limited. Though at present many zamindars consider these two dhabba families as upstarts and regard them no better than before, it seems that with the passage of time the dhabbas will build-up an improved position in the village.

What is the role of religion in the political hierarchy? I stated in the Introduction of this thesis that following Mill's "method of difference", I discovered the role of religion through a comparison between social hierarchies in India and those in Pakistan. After having surveyed five communities in India, I proceed with the task here and began with a comparison of political hierarchies. I make the comparison in three steps: first, I summarize evidence from the Indian communities; next, I consider evidence from Malakpur and note the differences between the evidence from the communities in the two countries; and finally I ask, does the sacred literature of the Islamic Faith explain these differences.

1. Evidence from the Indian Communities

a.) Castes are classified into "clean" and "unclean". The "unclean" castes may not attain positions of political leadership because they are not accepted by the "clean" castes on account of their natal impurity.

b.) It is necessary for those "unclean" castes who attain power and wealth to drop their "unclean" caste affiliations such as caste occupation and name to be accepted as leaders. As a rule such caste Sankritize themselves in the varna scale with the Brahman as a model.

c.) Individual social mobility is absent. It is possible only in groups. This is because of "relational pollution" rules governing caste endogamy and recruitment to the caste.

d.) Vertical political cleavages are segmental in so far as that though political cleavages may divide a caste, agnatic obligations and ritual links continue to bind the caste together. Vertical political cleavages in the Indian communities are modified by kinship. Examples: Jat faction group in Rampur and the Bal and Anna Factions in Gaon.

2. Evidence from Malakpur

a.) Kaoms are classified into two categories, zamindars and kammis. The distinction is based upon power over resources and not upon any inherent qualities.

b.) Kammis must legitimize a higher position in the political hierarchy by acquiring power over resources, by abandoning their kammi occupation and identification with kammi kaoms. There is nothing like

the varna scale. Until the British times a distinction was made between kaoms of foreign and those of local origin. The former were ranked higher than the latter on account of the formers association with the rulers. However, since Independence these distinctions are not emphasized and are becoming less meaningful. The Awans no longer emphasize their Semitic descent.

Again there is no Brahman model. All kaoms have identical religious duties and the mere accident of birth in any kaom does not entitle an individual to any given position. In Malakpur there are three Sayyed families. They claim a descent from the Prophet of Islam, two of command little respect because of their moral shortcomings. The third Sayyed is respected. This is probably because he is an imam (one who leads prayer congregation) and is known for his piety. He was elected a member of the Union Council in 1959.

c.) Vertical social mobility does not have to be collective. Individuals are not bound up with their descent groups through any form of "relational pollution" nor does recruitment to a kaom depend upon the origin of the mother. Though kaom endogamy is fairly widely practiced, it is not universal and is on the decline.

d.) Vertical political cleavages divide the kaoms into well defined almost mutually exclusive sections. Brothers and more often cousins jointopposing faction groups, and the composition of these groups is determined more by personal interest rather than kinship obligations.

3. Does the sacred literature of the Islamic Faith explain these differences? The answer is in the affirmative. According to the Koran:

O ye men, Surely we have created you all of a male and of a female and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most careful of his duties (49:13).

Everyman has been created in a state of purity - none is born sinful; it is by his own misdeeds that a man degrades himself (30; 95, 5).

Still again and those who strive hard for us, We shall certainly guide them in our ways, and Allah is surely with the doers of good (29:69).

In his last sermon the Prophet of Islam said:

No Arab has superiority over any non-Arab, and no non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; no dark person has any superiority over a white person, and no white person has any superiority over a dark person. The criterion of honour in the sight of God is righteousness and honest living (Alk: 1936).

a.) My contention is that the role of Islam in the political hierarchy is as follows: It is relatively easier for those occupying lower positions in the political hierarchy to attain a higher position because this can be achieved individually.

b.) Inter-kaom confrontation is less likely to take place because the dominant kaom does not feel threatened by upward social mobility of individuals from the subordinate kaoms here and there. This is unlike the communities in India where at best the vertical political cleavages are in a modified form giving rise to a greater likelihood of intercaste confrontation.

It is important to discuss here one of the major findings by Nicholas.

He writes:

Inter caste conflict is important in village politics only where the dominant caste makes up less than half of the total village population (ed. Singer and Cohn, 1968: 278).

It seems that this generalization is not fully applicable to communities in Pakistan. This assertion is based on my observations in a neighbouring village. The entire village is owned by two Awans A.N. and R. N. who have inherited it from a common grandfather. There has been little cooperation between the two cousins and many stories are told about their sharika.

An incident which took place during the World War II illustrates the phenomenon under discussion. It is reported that a number of women of Musalli kaom complained to R. N. that their male members had been forcibly taken away by A.N. to the Recruiting Camp Office and requested him to "free them" if possible. Upon hearing this R. N. went to the scene and found the men lined up. "What the devil are you doing here"? he asked. "Sir, A. N. brought us here". "Come along" he ordered and they followed him back to the village. It is reported that R. N. settled the matter with the Recruiting Officer later on.

It is significant that there has been no evidence of intra-kaom cooperation and inter-kaom confrontation in this village even during the Union Council elections. The followers of the two cousins have continued to remain in separate groups in spite of their kaoms being common. A possible

explanation of this phenomenon could be that the subordinate kaoms are dependent upon the two zamindars and are not in a position to follow an independent course of action. Yet the fact that an absence (or otherwise) of ritual bonds among descent groups determines at least in part, the direction of political cleavages must be recognized.



### Economic Hierarchy

The economic hierarchy in Malakpur has undergone many changes since the turn of the century when the village was much more self sufficient than it is today. The population was divided into those who had power over resources and those who were their dependents. The latter could be classified into three categories, namely, a.) those who received payments in kind from the zamindars at the time of harvest in exchange for specified services. This relationship was called seyp and was identical to what is known as jajmani or baluta in Indian communities. b) Those who were paid according to piece work. As cash economy was limited mainly to the cities, payments to these groups were also made in kind. c) Those who were given agricultural land in return for their services.

In Malakpur power over resources rested with the Awans, they being the only landowners. Among the category of dependents those who worked on seyp were the Lohar, the Nai, the Mochi, the Kubhar, the Machhi and the Musalli. The Teli, and the Dhabba, were paid according to piece work. The Imam and the Milar were given small pieces of agricultural land. Excepting the Iman, these occupational groups were collectively called kammis (workers). Their obligations and payments which they were to receive for their services were matters of traditions and subject to changes by elders of the kaoms from time to time. The obligations and payments prevalent in those days are given below.

The Lohar who also worked as a carpenter repaired and manufactured agricultural implements, doors, windows and beams for the houses, if

provided with the necessary material. He also made a pair of painted cots on the occasion of a marriage in a client's household.

The duties of the Nai consisted of cutting men's hair and trimming their beards, running errands and cooking at major ceremonies as well as on the occasion of vangar (a form of mutual help in agricultural work or house-building. Participants work for a day or two on reciprocal basis and are provided with food by the individual for whom the work is undertaken). It was he who dressed the bridegroom, his wife dressed the bride. He also performed circumcision and minor surgery.

The Mochi made and repaired shoes and leather coating for the trident used for winnowing, and supplied two pairs of shoes per head every year for his client's household.

The Kubhar supplied his clients with earthen pots twice a year as well as earthen buckets for Persian wells.

The Machhi worked as farm labourers, his wife baked loaves of bread at the community tandur (oven).

The Dhabbas made and dyed coarse cloth and bed covers.

The Teli crushed oil seeds, carded cotton and prepared quilts.

The Milar specialized in vegetable growing and cultivated well irrigated land.

The Musalli worked as a farm labourer as well as a drummer. He also assisted the Nai in cooking and serving food on the ceremonial occasions.

The Iman was somewhat different in so far as that he was a teacher and led the prayer congregation and therefore was treated with some respect.

The Lohar and the Mochi received equal payments, namely, four bundles of wheat or maize and 1/20th of the dheri (heap of grain after winnowing) twice a year at harvest time, excepting that the former received extra grains for his wood work for houses and cots, and the latter received hides of cattle.

The Nai and the Kubhar were paid half the quantities of grain to the Lohar and the Mochi, excepting that the Nai received food and extra grain on ceremonials and the Kubhar for earthen buckets.

The Machhi and the Musalli were given grains enough for the year.

The Teli obtained two pounds of oil seeds from every twelve pounds he crushed. The Dhabba was supplied with cotton yarn by his clients for weaving cloth. He received grains for his labour. The quantity of the grain was agreed upon in advance between him and his clients.

There was no Washerman nor was there a Scavenger in the village.

In recent years many changes in the occupational structure and consequently in the economic hierarchy have taken place. Though there is some confusion regarding landownership on account of the discrepancies

between de facto and de jure ownership yet it is possible to rank kaoms in a general way according to the extent of landownership. For example, almost all the Khurshedis, the Jhamals, the Bathrals, and the Imrals own land but about fifteen percent are landless in the Bajral, the Hafzal, the Jafzal, the Sadqual, the Hajal and Meher Mohammadal Kaoms. The proportion of the landless families in the remaining kaoms is higher. The proportion of the landed and the landless as well as the range of landholdings in the Khurshedis and the Hafzals is given below. Significantly land has not passed into the hands of any outsider but has been purchased by wealthier Awans within the village.

Table 27

<u>Size of Holdings (acres)</u>	<u>Khurshedis Number of Families</u>	<u>Hafzals Number of Families</u>
0	-	8
1 - 5	1	4
6 - 10	10	12
11 - 15	3	3
16 - 20	6	1
21 - 25	1	5
26 - 30	-	1
31 - 35	1	5
36 - 40	-	1
Over 40	1	-

Most of the landless Awans work as tenants and many small landholders have found employment outside the village. Thirty-five Awans are employed in the army and two are in the police service, one is a school teacher and four are clerks in the nearby town. An Awan has become a tailor and another has opened a shop. The latter is also an unpaid Imam.

Changes in the kammi group are also notable and are shown in Table 28.

Table 28

<u>Occupational Groups and total Number of Families</u>	<u>Traditional Occupation</u>	<u>Present Occupation</u>
Lohar 9	Blacksmith Carpenter	Traditional Occupation - 9
Nai 7	Barber Cook	Traditional Occupation - 4
		Traditional Occupation + Tenant - 3
Mochi 11	Tanner Shoemaker	Traditional Occupation - 7
		Traditional Occupation + Tenant - 4
Kubhar 3	Potter	Traditional Occupation + Tenant - 3
Machhi 3	Farm labour - general factotum	Traditional Occupation - 3
Musalli 12	Farm Labour drummer	Traditional Occupation - 9
		Weaving - 3

Teli 3	Oil-presser Cotton-carder	Traditional Occupation - 2
		Blacksmith - 1
Dhabba 12	Weaver calico-printer	Traditional Occupation - 5
		Shopkeeper - 4
		Iman + farming - 2
		Hakim (Native doctor) - 1
Milar 12	Vegtable grower	Traditional Occupation - 5
		Shopkeeper - 4
		Army Service- 2
		Shopkeeper + Iman - 1

A number of kammis have purchased plots and have built their own houses during the last decade. These are Milar 10, Dhabba 5, Lohar 4, Nai 2, Mochi 1. Further many kammis have migrated to other places such as newly colonized areas in Thal and Sind. Those who migrated during the last ten years were Mochi 7, Milar 5, Nai 5, Machhi 2, Dhabba 2, Teli 2.

To sum up: In the earlier economic hierarchy the Awans were higher and the kammis were lower. Various occupational groups within the kammi category did not differ markedly from one another because little differentiation in wealth was discernable. Subsistence seemed to be their main concern. Fortes would characterize Malakpur as a homogeneous society. He writes:

A homogeneous society is ideally one in which any person in the sense given to this term by Radcliffe-Brown in his recent (1950) essay, can be substituted for any other person of the same category without bringing about changes in the social structure. This implies that any two persons of the same category have the same body of customary usages and beliefs (Am. Anth. Vol. 55, 1953: 36).

In the present economic hierarchy the extent of social substitutability is less than before. All Awans are not economically independent, nor are all kammis economically dependent.

The first question to be considered here is why were the Awans higher and the kammis lower in the earlier economic hierarchy. The higher position of the Awans was apparently due to their numerical strength and their organized and successful attempts to maintain their hold on their lands since the sixteenth century and perhaps even earlier.

The extent to which tradition was a factor in the callings of the various kammi groups is a matter of conjecture because of the assertion of some kammis that they were no different from the Awans and had inherited their occupation from their ancestors who like themselves had no choice but to take to a kammi calling. This assertion is supported by the absence of any ritual constraint upon choice of callings.

Another explanation of the economic hierarchy was that it was due to the self sufficiency of the village. It was a structural necessity for Malakpur to contain both craftsmen and landowners. Thus, the descent factor in the position of the kammis is not very significant. Had the ancestors of the present kammis not accepted the subordinate positions which they did, their place would have been taken by some others in Malakpur.

The changes in the early economic hierarchy may be attributed to a number of factors, most important ones being subdivision of land into un-economic holdings feuds and litigation and new economic opportunities in a field much wider than the village. In other words the landlessness



of nearly one fifth of the Awans is due to the fact that they sold their inherited shares on account of their being uneconomic, and partly because many of them found employment outside the village. The Awans do not appear to be different from the Warriors in Bisipara in regard to subdivisions of holdings and the consequent selling of land. However, the two cases are not quite identical because unlike Bisipara Warriors, the Awans did not sell their land in order to meet expenses on ceremonials. The reasons for the sale of land by the Awans may be sought elsewhere. Darling writes:

Further west, owing to the factions and feuds, from Attock to Muzaffargarh, litigation and debt appears to be closely allied. To people, says the Settlement Officer of Mianwali, "who are not only delighted to take advantage of the smallest chance of joining in an affray or trying their strength but are also desperately fond of civil litigation, years of plenty offer an irresistible temptation to spend money in connection with cases in which the long run prove utterly ruinous (1947: 68).

Further, the holdings which Awans had sold would probably not have been uneconomic were it not for the fact that a zamindar was expected to meet all his seyp obligations and perhaps give a little more for added prestige. Darling illustrates the behaviour pattern of a zamindar with the example of a Baluch landowner on the western bank of the Indus. This zamindar was left with nothing for himself after he had "settled" with the kammis at the dheri. He remarked "Sain pat rakha" (God saved my honour), signifying that he was satisfied because he had met all his obligations as a zamindar (1947: 100).

The relatively higher position of the kammis in the economic hierarchy is due to new economic opportunities. Until the Independence they had two formidable obstacles in their upward social mobility, the zamindars, and the Hindus shopkeepers. The former are still there and though the abolition of the Panjab Alienation of Land Act has entitled kammis to purchase agricultural property the zamindars have made the best of hak shufa ( legislation safeguarding the rights of a neighbour to buy land) and have prevented the land from passing into the hands of the kammis. However, the second obstacle is no longer there. The Hindu shopkeepers have left. As has been shown in the previous section, excepting two or three shops, all the shops in Malakpur are owned and operated by kammis.

Are the positions in the economic hierarchy achieved or ascribed? The positions in the economic hierarchy are achieved, and not ascribed. The landless Awans are lower in the economic hierarchy in spite of the fact that they belong to the zamindar category. Some Dahhabas and Milars are higher in the hierarchy than the Awans in spite of the fact that they belong to the kammi category.

What is the role of religion in the economic hierarchy? Following the procedure which was adopted in the section dealing with the political hierarchy I begin with a summary of what were found to be the principal factors in the economic hierarchies in Indian communities. Next I make a comparison between the Indian situation and that in Malakpur and ask how far might the differences be explained by a reference to the Islamic Faith.

#### Evidence from the Indian communities

- a) Occupations are ranked according to the extent of purity or pollution. The very basis of rank was vital (Orenstein). A man of ucho or a high caste may not take to impure calling however lucrative it may be (Bisipara).
- b) Individual social mobility is absent. If an individual from unclean caste becomes wealthy he initiates the process of fission in the caste to which he belongs. This is because "there is a need which has always existed in the caste system namely to translate familial mobility to caste mobility". Whom will the sons and daughters of the mobile family marry? (Srinivas). The Boro Sundi in Bisipara are an example.
- c) Heavy expenses on ceremonials are incurred to meet ritual obligations, sometimes resulting in the sale of land and a lower position in the economic hierarchy (Bisipara).

#### Evidence from Malakpur

- a) There are two ways of ranking kaoms. (i) Those who have power over resources (zamindars) are ranked higher than those who have not (kammi). (ii) Provided that wealth is equal, those who claim a foreign descent (Pathan, Mughal and Sayyeds) are ranked higher than those who do not (Sheikh). All local converts to Islam irrespective of their origin and occupation are collectively called Sheikhs.

Customarily if a kammi acquires wealth he abandons his kammi calling and is identified as a Sheikh. Mobility from one kaom to another also takes two forms. It may mean a change from kammi title to zamindar title e.g. from Lohar to Malak. The second form of mobility is the change of the title of a kammi kaom to Sheikh and even kaoms of foreign descent, a phenomenon resulting from acquisition of wealth. Ibbetson's observations are of interest here. He writes that there is a common saying, namely, "last year I was a Julaha (weaver); this year I am a Shekh; next year if prices rise I shall be a Sayyed" (1916: 222). Census figures from Campbellpur District also indicate that this saying is well founded. According to the census figures the Milars numbered 36,565 in 1901 and only 10,516 in 1931, while the Awans numbered 150,898 in 1901 and 204,295 in 1931 (Dist. Gazt, 1901 and 1933, Vol. XXII Pt. XXXIV-XXXVII).

In Malakpur itself two Awans have become shopkeepers and so have many kammis. This shows the predominance of rational motivation in the economic hierarchy.

- b) Social mobility is not collective. Unlike castes in India endogamy is not an integral factor in social mobility. A person who becomes wealthy may find spouses for his children in groups of his own economic class. This process is facilitated by the relative ease by which kaom titles may be changed. Should an individual become poor, he also finds spouses for his children in groups of his

own class. This is oftentime on exchange basis.

These asserts are based on observations made in two different areas. (i) a fairly high percentage of officers in the army as well as in the civil services belong to kammi families. They marry in cities with educated girls without much considerations to the origin of either of the spouses. (ii) The settlers in Rahmatwala, a new settlement in Thal are refugees from India. Seven families are immigrants from Hoshiarpur, twelve from Jullundur and twenty-two from Amritsar. Those from Hoshiarpur, are Rajputs, those from Jullundur are Arains and those from Amritsar are Jats. Interestingly, for the first two years they went as far as Lahore (a distance of about two hundred miles) to find spouses in their own kinship group. However, in recent years they have started exchange marriages within the village as well as with the local population.

The reasons for abandoning endogamy is said to be a marked contrast in wealth between them and their more prosperous kinsmen. In Malakpur itself the cases of those kammi families who have migrated to other places also support the assertion that social mobility is an individual phenomenon. These families will find spouses for their children from the economic groups in their new homes.

- c) Expenditure on ceremonials is not a cause of the sale of ancestral property.

My contention is that the differences between the Indian communities and Malakpur are due to the fact that in the case of the former ritual

constraints play a very significant part while in the case of the latter there are no ritual constraints.

## CONCLUSION

## Conclusion

In the preceeding sections I examined the various communities more or less as independent social systems. In the present section I adopt a broader approach. Keeping in view their common formative factors, I revert to the question raised in the beginning of this thesis and ask if the definition of the concept caste can be based on structural criteria rather than on particular features of the Hindu philosophical scheme. However, before I offer an answer to this question it is necessary to consider some well known attempts to find structural criteria for the definition of caste.

In his monograph, *Caste Ranking and Community Structure in Five Regions in India and Pakistan*, Marriott undertakes the systematic explanation of regional similarities and differences in elaboration of the "caste system of India and Pakistan" in terms of associated features of community structure. It is hypothesized and "provisionally proved that elaboration of caste ranking is shaped and determined" by the extent to which the following features of structure are present: (1) numerous ethnic groups in the community; (2) members of these groups "interact with members of other groups in a clearly stratified order"; (3) their interactions as individuals must not deviate widely from the stratified order of interaction among their respective castes taken as wholes;; (4) members of the local hierarchy are isolated from hierarchies elsewhere which are inconsistent with it (1960: 4).



It is generally agreed that Marriott's study falls short of its promise. It is weakened by the pervasive circularity of its main argument and by the ambiguity in definition of the variable under investigation.

Barth's analysis in his *System of Social Stratification in Swat, North Pakistan* is more fruitful. He writes:

Pathans in Swat express the notion of compatibility and incompatibility of statuses in terms of a concept of shame (sharm). A man is "ashamed" to assume any position or perform any action which he feels is incompatible with his caste status... In its relevance to caste, shame expresses precisely the notion of hierarchical incompatibility of statuses and roles, and applied equally to up-and-down-grading; for example, a carpenter refuses, from shame, to perform a polluting service like washing clothes for another, while feeling of shame similarly prevents him from trying to exercise authority over a caste superior such as a Pakhtun or a Saint who is in debt to him. The use of this shame concept by Pathans corresponds to the use of the pollution concept among Hindus. Shame directs the choices made by individuals in assuming new part statuses. The caste organization depends for its maintenance on the explicit recognition of this discriminating factor.

He goes on to say:

The principal of status summation seems to be the structural feature which most clearly characterizes caste as a system of social stratification (1962: 142-5).

Bailey also considers the principle of summation of roles as one of the structural features which most clearly characterizes caste as a system of social stratification, the other two being birth ascription and cooperation.

He writes:

Is it possible, then, to conceive that cooperative activity could exist without the summation of roles, or vice-versa? That is, could there be a system of groups, connected by mutual and complementary rights and duties, so that the people in group A had e.g. a high ritual status and a low political status vis-a-vis group B? Clearly this is possible so long as the fields in which authority is exercised are

clearly separated from one another. (In the case of politics and economics both concern power over resources in men and materials, and I cannot conceive of a system of cooperation where there was not also in the last resort summation of roles).

But in the field of religion and politics, we cannot say that cooperation entails the summation of roles. Therefore, as structural features defining caste, to birth-ascription and cooperation, we must add the summation of roles. Caste systems are always involute systems.

He believes that for a society to exhibit a caste system the groups must be exclusive, exhaustive, ranked, closed, relations between which are organized by summation of roles and which cooperate and do not compete, further that caste in this sense exist in small scale societies or enclaves of larger societies. As an isolated community loses its economic and political self-sufficiency and becomes a part of the larger society, it also loses the cooperation among its castes. Thus, the caste conflicts in the Indian communities are due to the fact that they are no longer interdependent as in a small village. They are now economic groups competing for their interest rather than cooperating. This explains why says Bailey there are caste associations in India. (Archive. Europ. Jr. of Soc. IV. 1963: 120,1).

The value of the principle of summation of roles as a structural characteristic of social stratification cannot be denied. Nadel writes:

More generally speaking, role overlaps can function as "linked incentives" so that, through their linkage, the normative behaviour implicit in one role is safeguarded by the value character of the other ...

The advantages of role summation lies in the strengthening of social integration and of social control. For the more roles an individual combines in his person, the more is he linked by relationships with persons in other roles and in diverse areas of social life...

Why should there be a summation of roles at all? I do not quite know how to answer this since we simply cannot conceive of a society entirely without it. But this much can, I think safely be said. The summation of roles is an aspect of the general principle of "allocation" which we discussed before; it forms part of the basic "economy" of societies, in the sense that it reflects the balance between needs (to have such and such proficiencies, interests and aims represented in the population) and resources (the human beings available (1964: 71-72)...

My submission is that a comparison between social hierarchies in India and Pakistan shows that the structural definition of caste is incomplete. This is so because of the following reasons.

- a.) Even before Malakpur lost its original self-sufficiency the groups in it were not mutually exclusive in so far as all kaoms prayed side by side in a mosque and there was no ritual ranking as in communities in India. Pollution as in the Hindu belief system has never been manifested in Malakpur.
- b.) The structural definition of caste does not explain why the directions of political cleavages should be different from those in India.
- c.) Finally the structural definition of caste takes no account of the collective social mobility in India as contrasted to individual social mobility in Pakistan.

May I therefore conclude that the social stratification in India is unique, both structurally and culturally and therefore the only form which may be justifiably called caste.

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